Shifting Waterscapes: Tradition, Development and Change in Orissa

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Submitted by
Sailen Routray

Under the Supervision of
Dr. N. Shantha Mohan

School of Social Sciences
National Institute of Advanced Studies
Indian Institute of Science Campus
Bangalore – 560012

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DECLARATION

I, Sailen Routray, certify that this thesis entitled "**Shifting Waterscapes: Tradition, Development and Change in Orissa"** is the result of research work done by me under the supervision of **Dr. N. Shantha Mohan**, School of Social Sciences, NIAS, where this research work was carried out. I am submitting this thesis for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in **Development Studies** of the University of Mysore, Mysore.

I, further, certify that this thesis has not been submitted by me for the award of any other Degree or Diploma of this or any other University

Signature of Doctoral Candidate: Date:
(Sailen Routray)

Signature of Guide:
(N. Shantha Mohan) Date:

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I hereby certify that the thesis entitled **"Shifting Waterscapes: Tradition, Development and Change in Orissa"** submitted by Mr. Sailen Routray in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in Development Studies** is an original work carried out under my guidance and supervision.

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Date:

N. Shantha Mohan
Guide
Research Scientist
School of Social Sciences
National Institute of Advanced Studies

Abstract

Kalahandi has been discussed as a case of absolute deprivation amidst relative plenty, and the reason for this has often been identified as the lack of proper developmental action by the state. Amongst governmental developmental interventions, water-related interventions, especially those related to watershed development, assume salience because of the framing of Kalahandi as a land of drought. To understand emergent forms of governmental action in the field of watershed development in Kalahandi, doctoral fieldwork was undertaken in the project site of Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project (WORLP), a governmental, participatory watershed development project that was being implemented in Kalahandi. Doctoral fieldwork was undertaken in the period between June 2008 and February 2010 using ethnographic methods such as in-depth unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews, observation and participant observation along with collection of secondary material.

The study identifies the mission mode of doing government as a key change that happened during the last 25 years involving an increased importance of 'social' technologies. The study describes five governmental tactics related to emergent modes of governmental action; it also identifies an increasing convergence in the everyday practices of governmental and non-governmental organisations, and the growth of 'the social' as a terrain and object of governmental action as two important effects of the deployment of these tactics.

The study identifies *toutary* as a key social domain that frames the perceptions and actions of people related to the state. As a domain toutary is populated by social agents, called *touters*; toutary can be defined as the interstitial zone between state and society created by the increasing penetration by the state through social technologies. This study provides a critique of a dominant strand of theorising the state in India involving borrowings of Gramscian notions of passive revolution into the Indian context and its recent extension through the political society formulation to understand the postcolonial state in India. It shows the advantages of an ethnographic approach towards studying the everyday state in India, and tries to briefly discuss implications of such an understanding of the state for 'underdeveloped' districts such as Kalahandi.

Preface

I am from the district of Cuttack in coastal Odisha, and grew up mostly in the city of Bhubaneswar in the same region. Kalahandi lies some twelve hours away from these places by bus. But I have a family connection with the district. I have two younger sisters. One was born in Bhawanipatna, the headquarters of Kalahandi. Our father had a transferable job in the then Electricity Board of the Government of Odisha. One of his postings in the peripatetic life that he, and we led, was in Bhawanipatna between 1981 and 1983. I was really young when he was posted there. I do not have any recollections of the district from that time. But my father and mother have fond memories of their stay there that extended for almost two years. They remember the lovable ferocity of the monsoons, and the green walls of trees that used to stand at odd angles to the roads of the district. The smells of its myriad local varieties of rice, and the texture of desi chicken that was available really cheap there in the early 1980s still haunt them. More than anything else, they remember the startling openness of the local population towards outsiders, the easy familiarity across social groups, the vernacular cosmopolitanism of a small town like Bhawanipatna that has migrants from Bihar and Calcutta (amongst many other places), the intensity of the festivities of the Chhatar Jātrā of goddess Mānikeswari, and the longing that the district evokes long after one has left it.

But Kalahandi is the Somalia of India. Starting from the mid-1980s the district has become a source of continuous reportage surrounding drought and hunger, especially in the English language national press in India. But the district's social reality is complex. The district has a reputation of being overwhelmingly tribal. 29 percent of the district's population comprises of Scheduled Tribes. In comparison, Odisha's tribal population stands at 22 percent of the total. Kalahandi does have a substantial tribal population. But in terms of proportion, it is not substantially larger than that of Odisha. Only Thuamul Rampur and Lanjigarh blocks of the district are listed as scheduled areas under the Fifth Schedule of the constitution of India. But by popular perception and self-assertion by the tribal group of Kondhs, Kalahandi is seen as being a land of the Kondhs, and Kondhs as being the original inhabitants of the district. In fact, despite the immigration of a larger number of social groups from neighbouring regions, Kondhs still consist of around 13 percent of the district's population.

A large part of the district comprises of valleys of rivers such as Tel, Udanti and Utei. Important rivers such as Indravati originate in the hills of the district. Parts of the district occupy the north eastern portions of the Eastern Ghat mountain ranges of India and are heavily forested. But significant parts of the district, especially in the Dharamgarh sub-division consists of extensive plains, now irrigated with water from the Upper Indravati Project on River Indravati .

The district is an erstwhile princely state that was ruled by the Nāga dynasty more or less continuously for over one thousand years till the integration of the state into the republic of India in 1948. It is one of the very few small kingdoms in Odisha to have a history of continuous rule by a single dynasty. At various points of time it was a feudatory state to various regional and national empires and political formations such as

those of the Eastern Gangas, the Suryavamsi Gajapatis, the Marathas and the British. Although the self-perception of the district is that of a peaceful and peace-loving one, the history, at least its recent history related to British colonialism, is quite bloody, with the 1882 rebellion of the Kondhs being one of the most violent in Odisha's history.

Reportedly, this rebellion took place because of a governmental initiative to 'improve' the kingdom's agriculture and economy by settling Kulthas, a peasant caste in tribal areas. This intervention, the response to it by the administration, and its subsequent framings, have provided continuing tropes for looking at Kalahandi's social reality. Stories about statist interventions, their types and efficacies, have shaped Kalahandi as a set of narratives. Even when governmental actions and interventions are supposed to saturate the descriptions of social processes in Kalahandi, what we do not have good accounts of are the changes in the forms of governmental actions, and the ways in which people perceive and act with respect to these actions. Descriptions surrounding the state and politics in Kalahandi and in India tend to give accounts of state formation in which the story of the state is, more often than not, the story of class coalitions and dynamics and/or processes of claim-making on the state by communities.

This thesis is an attempt at providing an alternative account regarding the state in India. It tries to shift the frame of discussions from politics to state, and tries to narrate processes of, what it terms as state-fabrication (instead of state-formation) by taking a self-consciously poststructuralist turn. The sectoral context is that of watershed development, and the methodological vantage point for the work is that of multi-sited ethnography. The thesis identifies what it terms as the period of the long 1980s (1977-91) as a significant period of shift in which the modes of state-fabrication changed substantially in India. It then goes on to describe an emergent mode of state-fabrication that seems to dominantly frame governmental actions and people's perceptions of the state – the mission mode. It also provides descriptions of tactics deployed under this mode. It identifies a vernacular social domain – that of *toutary*, at the intersections of state and society in Kalahandi. It argues that such a domain provides better accounts of processes of state-society interactions in Kalahandi than recent formulations such as political society. Thus, these various strands of arguments offered by the thesis provide a counter-narrative and build a counter-case against a dominant theoretical position that tries to account for state and politics in India. The thesis identifies this dominant position as the passive revolution formulation and its political society extension. It argues that such formulations do not account for processes of state-fabrication in Kalahandi adequately.

Instead of providing *a* theory to dominant strands of theorising, this thesis tries to provide an alternative by providing a new conceptual vocabulary consisting of such terms as modes of state-fabrication and regimes of state-fabrication that can form the basis of further theorising. The possibilities of generalization offered by the thesis are therefore at the level of concepts and not at the level of specific processes. Thus, this thesis as much, holds the promise of many journeys as it is the end of the doctoral one.

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This is a study of emergent forms of governmental action in Kalahandi, Odisha. It has benefited immensely from the support of villagers in Kalahandi and governmental staff of the various village-level microwatershed development committees, block-level Project Implementing Agencies, District Watershed Mission, Kalahandi and Orissa Watershed Development Mission. Because of reasons of research confidentiality they cannot be named. But without their generousity this thesis would not have been possible. Hope many of them will find themselves and their stories on these pages and not flinch at the academic context in which these have been put.

My family, like that of most doctoral students, has been long-suffering and indulgent of my work. I hope it finds in this thesis some compensation for the sacrifices it has made on my behalf. My friends, especially the 'non-academic' ones have helped by just being there and caring for me, and by being always concerned about my work.

Doctoral research is supposed to be lonely work, but for me it has involved finding friends, both in the field and in the wider academic community.

Thanks, to you all; this thesis is as much yours as it is mine.

(**Sailen Routray**)

Contents

List of abbreviations

APD: Assistant Project Director
APL: Above Poverty Line
BPL: Below Poverty Line
BSE: Bombay Stock Exchange
CBT: Capacity Building Team
CLW: Community Link Worker
CO: Community Worker
CSIR: Council of Scientific and Industrial Research
DFID: Department for International Development
DWM: District Watershed Mission
FCI: Food Corporation of India
GoI: Government of India
GONGO: Government Organised Non-Governmental Organisation
GoO: Government of Odisha
IIT: Indian Institute of Technology
LIC: Life Insurance Corporation
LST: Livelihoods Support Team
NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation
OBC: Other Backward Classes
OWDM: Orissa Watershed Development Mission
PRI: Panchayati Raj Institution
PSU: Project Support Unit
PD: Project Director
PIA: Project Implementing Agency
SHG: Self Help Group
WDT: Watershed Development Team
WORLP: Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project

Chapter I
Introduction and literature review

I. Background and brief introduction

This thesis looks at emergent forms of governmental action by taking a watershed development project being implemented in a district in Odisha[1] as a case. The project is the Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project (WORLP), and the district is Kalahandi, located in the South-West corner of Odisha. Kalahandi is the Somalia of India; the name evokes a geography of hunger, a history of backwardness where repeated droughts have broken the backbone of a long-suffering population. Its image is that of a place where development has failed, where the state does not reach and cannot deliver its services, a place characterised by failure of governmental action. News reports continue to find their way from either Kalahandi or the Greater Kalahandi region[2] into the national media, narrating stories of distress sale of children, hunger and of starvation deaths.

Despite the surfeit of stories in the media coming out of the region, the total volume of academic work on the region is relatively limited. Two books, one academic and the other journalistic, appear to have shaped the narratives surrounding the region to a considerable extent. Bob Currie's (2000) book *The politics of hunger in India*, located in the discipline of political science analyses the rise of hunger and starvation in Kalahandi as a public policy issue, and blames the failure of governmental action for the

[1] The name of the state of Orissa has recently been changed officially to Odisha and the name of the official language of the state has been changed to Odia from Oriya. This thesis title was registered before this change happened. Therefore, the thesis title maintains the older spelling whereas inside the text of the thesis the new spelling Odisha is used apart from places where the older spellings continue in the name of governmental projects and organisations.

[2] Kalahandi is an erstwhile princely state that got incorporated into the Indian state of Odisha in the post-independence period. Kalahandi joined with the Union of India on January 1, 1948, and it was subsequently merged with the state of Odisha on November 1, 1949. The subdivision of Nuapada was added to it to create the district of Kalahandi. In the 1960s the *zamindari* of Kashipur, that was originally a part of the princely state of Kalahandi, and subsequently had formed a part of the Kalahandi district of the state of Odisha, was separated from the district and incorporated into the then undivided Koraput district for purported reasons of administrative efficiency. The district of Nuapada was carved out of Kalahandi in 1993 during a process of reorganisation of districts in Odisha when the 13 districts of the state were divided to create 30 districts to facilitate effective administration. Kashipur, after this process of reorganisation, forms a part of Rayagada district. The greater Kalahandi region, thus, comprises the present districts of Kalahandi and Nuapada, and the Kashipur block of Rayagada district.

continuation of deprivation in the district/region. Far more influential has been *Everybody loves a good drought* (*ELAGD*) by the journalist P. Sainath (1996). *ELAGD* is a collection of reports from the poorest districts of India, and has many stories from the Greater Kalahandi region. During the initial days of fieldwork in the region scholars, activists and NGO professionals would refer to these two texts as if Kalahandi can only be known when filtered through these stories/texts.

But these two texts are not radically different from most other academic and public policy literature on Kalahandi, which has primarily focused on issues of hunger and starvation (Mishra 2010, Banik 2008). These narratives frame Kalahandi as a land of drought and deprivation, starting in the mid-1980s. A large part of this literature takes the work of Amartya Sen (1977, 1981, 1982) on famines and his capability approach as a point of departure. By focusing on the failure of public action as well as that of the state, this literature points at the broader failures of the development process.

Such a framing does two things. First, by keeping the focus on hunger and starvation in Kalahandi, it manages to 'naturalise' the issue and sees the social reality of Kalahandi through the dominant optic of starvation—Kalahandi becomes the place where people starve. Second, it makes for a normative approach with prescriptions varying according to the ideological and political positioning of the relevant social actors. The reasons behind the persistent poverty and deprivation in a region such as Kalahandi need to be understood by interrogating the consensus on Kalahandi's deprivation. Reading the situation in Kalahandi as one of state failure and failure of governmental action assumes what the state is and that it is useful to understand and interpret governmental action in terms of success and failure. This is not to argue that there is no hunger in Kalahandi, but to posit that political–economic arguments that purportedly explain this hunger and deprivation need to be supplemented by accounts that aim at understanding the state, in terms of its everyday functioning with respect to governmental action.

Over the last decade or so a small body of scholarship has emerged on the everyday state in India, especially in the discipline of social anthropology, that has used multisited

ethnography as a method and tries to understand the effects and meanings of governmental actions. But there are serious gaps in these accounts (Mukhopadhyay 2011). This study tries to fill such a gap by trying to break out of the constraints of normative accounts of the state by giving processual accounts of newly emergent forms of governmental actions. To interrogate these normative accounts, and to understand governmental actions better, the methodological stance of multisited ethnography has been adopted for the purpose of this study.

The framing of Kalahandi as a case of developmental failure had led to many different kinds of interventions in various sectors. Amongst these water-related interventions assume salience because of the image of Kalahandi as a land of drought. It is argued that watershed related interventions are more appropriate to the topography and climate of Kalahandi as opposed to dam-based canal irrigation (Pradhan 1993). Therefore, interventions related to watershed development become an important site for studying governmental actions in the context of Kalahandi.

To understand emerging forms of governmental action in the field of watershed development in Kalahandi, this thesis aims to answer three key research questions:

1. How has Kalahandi been framed as an iconic backward and marginal district, and how to locate this framing within broader shifts of governmental action?
2. What are the emergent forms of governmental action that try to reach out to marginal areas such as Kalahandi and to marginal communities, and how do the effects of such emergent governmental actions map out on the ground?
3. What are the vernacular perceptions of these emergent forms of governmental action in Kalahandi, and how to study the state through the forms and perceptions of these governmental actions?

In answering these questions in the specific social context of Kalahandi and the sectoral context of watershed development this thesis contributes to the understanding of the state in India.

This chapter of the thesis provides a framework for locating the study. This introductory section has provided a background to the thesis, whereas the second section provides a review of relevant literature. The third, fourth and fifth sections provide the rationale, objectives and methodology of the study respectively. The sixth section of this chapter discusses the key terms developed by the researcher and introduced in the thesis. The seventh and the final section discusses the schema and the logic of the chapterisation of the thesis, and provides some details regarding the chapters and the arguments that they make.

II. Review of literature

As discussed in the previous section, failure and success of governmental action, and the reading of Kalahandi's poverty and destitution as a failure of governmental actions, calls for a discussion of the role of the state in development.

Development and the state

Development emerged as a project of international governance after the Second World War; at least some narratives posit that it emerged directly out of the policy of strategic containment that the US government followed for limiting the spread of communism. Other narratives of development as a process and a project posit a more ancient lineage. In the post-WW-II period this 'developmental thrust' by the US government was paralleled by certain broad trends in social science theories. This period was marked by the growth and spread of, what were termed as modernisation theories. These theories were essentially stage theories that were teleological in nature; they made the varying geographies of the world into a function of teleological time. Thus, the present of Western Europe and Anglophone America became the desired and possible future of the recently decolonised societies (Leys 2005).

The ascendance of modernisation theories in the social sciences problematised what they saw as tradition. They did this by theorising that rapid economic growth and the attendant capitalist transformation was difficult in the newly decolonised nations due to traditional beliefs and practices. This reading provided for the postcolonial states a central role in development (Edelman and Haugerud 2005; Leys 2005). Modernisation theories were challenged vigorously by Marxist anthropologists and dependency theorists. The latter showed that the historical and political roots of underdevelopment in many of the newly decolonised countries did not lie in the absence of capitalist modernity. They argued that the underdevelopment of the non-West was actually produced by their incorporation into a world-wide capitalist economy. Much of dependency theory literature, especially the later works of André Gunder Frank, was very pessimistic about the role of any state acting within the broad framework of world capitalism to function as an agent of autonomous development (Menzies and Marcus 2005; Peet and Hartwick 2005). The challenge of dependency theory fractured the dominance of modernisation theories, and led to the now-famous crisis of development theory in the 1980s (Manzo 1991). This period was paralleled by the growth of neoclassical economics that challenged much of development economics (Kay 1993).

Apart from the arguments offered by neoclassical economists, postdevelopment theorists also challenge much of extant development theory by taking a self-consciously poststructuralist stance. These theorists legitimately focus on both 'the project' of development and projects of development and point out their failures. Much of the postdevelopment literature presents a homogenous view of development (Corbridge 1998) that romanticises what it sees as local traditions, and tends to reify categories such as community. Some strands of such scholarship glorify the role of grassroots NGOs and social movements, and pitch them against the state as more acceptable actors towards achieving desirable social change (Schuurman 2000). Postdevelopment critiques of development see the role of the state in promoting human welfare in negative terms. Development is increasingly seen as a discourse or disciplinary apparatus for control by the state (Willis 2005). These two critiques, although deceptively dissimilar share many characteristics such as analyses that are marked by an antipathy towards the state as a

legitimate social actor, and by the privilege accorded to abstract operations of entities such as discourse or market as opposed to nuanced understanding of actual development practices (Cooper and Packard 2005). But with state authority being eroded in many parts of the world, especially in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, questions surrounding the feasibility of governmental action have become coupled with questions surrounding its desirability (Saha and Mallavarapu 2006). Both the critiques discussed above can be seen as varieties of state pessimism.

But the actual experience on the ground is mixed, with countries with varying political regimes ranging from the socialistic countries such as China to the apparently 'capitalist' economies such as South Korea (Cowen and Shenton 1996), and 'mixed' economies like India (Mukherji 2008) delivering high rates of economic growth and some improvements in human development. Discussions on the 'role of the state' in development, (if the issue is posited in such a manner) have focused more on the role of the state than on the state per se (Lange and Rueschemeyer 2005). To explicate, the overall thrust of the arguments about the role of the state have been about strategic state action, the extent to which governments interfere in economic activities, and the desirability of such interference. Thus, to a large extent the role of the state has been seen from a teleological, normative optic; once a certain desirable societal outcome has been set as a goal, the debates have been about the possibility and desirability of initiatives by the state in achieving such a goal (Lange 2010). The state as a relatively autonomous actor and the changes and transformations in its functioning remain relatively undertheorised in development literature (Migdal 2001).

In the contemporary conjuncture, the state has again started getting a lot of attention and its importance is being recognised by both theoreticians and practitioners (Roy Chowdhury 1999). But parallel to these shifts in academic theorising, the state as an entity is facing important challenges from widespread transnational migration, globalisation, ethnic movements and separatist movements. This has been parallel to the growth of demands on the state to ensure the exercise of an ever-expanding array of rights and entitlements for citizens (Edelman and Haugerud 2005). Despite the

experience of state failure, the state still exercises a great hold on people's imagination of what a good society is, and 'good governance' is high on the agenda of both multilateral agencies such as the World Bank as well as national governments (Chandhoke 2003, 2005). The desire for development and the concomitant demand for good governance by states for achieving developmental goals (for example, the Millennium Development Goals or MDGs) increasingly shape not only public policy but also what people expect of and the ways in which they perceive and experience the states they live in.

The postdevelopment impasse and points of departure

The demands for good governance among supra-national organisations and policy think-tanks have been accompanied by a growing disquiet about the state in much of academic literature. This has been coupled with an increased and persistent interrogation of the entire developmentalist framework (Schuurman 2000).

The poststructuralist scholars who critique development as discourse primarily borrow from the early and middle phases of work of Foucault and shift the focus from developmental intentionalities and the achievement or non-achievement of such intentions to the unintended consequences of various development projects. These analyses mimic Foucault by describing the disciplinary discourses that produced the modern subject. They tend to focus on the discursive and rhetorical strategies of development rather than empirically deal with the ways in which development projects affect communities. Besides, they challenge the normative desirability of development as a goal by critically examining the process of knowledge production inside the development apparatuses (Escobar 1995; Ferguson 1996).

These critiques have been in turn criticised for being theoretically over-determined. It has also been argued that the object of methodology—development—and the method used to analyse it—discourse analysis—do not make for a very productive fit (Agrawal 1996). As mentioned by some scholars (Agrawal 1996; Brigg 2002), the poststructuralist reading of development deploys an understanding of power that is

representative of what has been called the 'middle phase' of Foucault's theorising, which formulated, comparatively speaking, the more repressive notions of power. The more mature formulations of power by Foucault, such as bio-power and governmentality, do not find an echo in the work of these scholars.

The poststructuralist turn in the anthropology of development in particular and development studies in general has led to a proliferation of debates surrounding issues of development, power and agency. Scholars have critiqued proponents of postdevelopment for dealing with what are termed as unhelpful binaries (such the 'Third World' and the 'First World') and for basing their arguments on grand generalisations (Corbridge 1998). Much of poststructuralist development theory is criticised for sharing some characteristics of dependency theory by buying into the self-perception (widely shared) of global institutions and multinational corporations as being all powerful, for being based on inadequate fieldwork, and for being disciplinarily blind to the insights of other disciplines such as history and economics (Lehmann 1997). Other problems identified with respect to the application of the poststructuralist perspective to development include theoretical overdetermination, the replacement of one set of metanarratives by another, and the collapsing in theory of multiple and often contradictory discourses surrounding development as singular and homogenous (Agrawal 1996; Corbridge et al 2005).

Important strands of postdevelopment literature give a generalised account of development as discourse. There have been two 'answers' to criticisms on this count within postdevelopment: one is by keeping the focus on the effects of such interventions, the other is by providing a more detailed and nuanced history of development theory and practice (Nustad 2001). Other points of departure have been offered from the postdevelopment impasse plaguing development studies. Some commentators suggest that Gadamer's notion of fusion of horizons by positing a new hermeneutical understanding of the self and the other can reinvigorate development thinking[3] (Graaff

[3] In 20th century German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer's writings, tradition does the same conceptual work that discourse performs in Foucault's scholarship. Gadamer's idea of fused horizons, in which self-knowledge and knowledge of the other are fused together in a dialectic, allows for human subjectivity (Graaff 2006).

2006). Other scholars borrowing from ideas of a reflexive postmodernity, especially the theories of Ulrich Beck, have argued that contemporary social struggles and concerns will be increasingly about managing risks engendered by modernity and not the achievement of utopian imaginaries such as development (Pieterse 1998).

Other commentators argue that development studies can gain by engaging with postcolonial studies. Development studies is seen as traditionally not being concerned with questions surrounding the voice and agency of subaltern groups, and the engagement of postcolonial scholars, by raising these issues and by their creative grappling with them, is expected to offer valuable insights for scholars in development studies (Sylvester 1999; Kapoor 2002). Those proposing a postcolonial point of departure for proceeding away from the impasse induced by the postdevelopment turn do not tell us how to synthesise these two diverse fields, and empirical studies offering some kind of dialoguing are also not generally offered.

It is necessary to shift the analytic gaze from studying only the effects (intended or unintended) of development actions to studying the ways in which their logic and the new spaces opened by them are used and abused by people who are the objects and agents of such projects. This will involve seeing institutions and processes meant for development not merely as sites where exercise of state power or resistance to such an exercise take place, but as malleable new symbolic and material resources that lend themselves to be used for different kinds of assemblages of social action.

Nustad (2001), in this context, argues for a more field-based, actor-oriented approach, which recognises that formal institutions/mechanisms instituted by development for its own purposes can be and are used for other purposes by both subaltern and other groups (ibid). This means not merely shifting the focus from discourse to practice, but also a shift from politics to state. This thesis makes the claim that most anthropological literature (and a large strand of literature from other disciplines as well) focuses on politics when purportedly the attempt is to provide an account of the

state. Instead of descriptions of changing forms of governmental action, what are offered are narratives of political dynamics with respect to claim-making on the state.

There is already a strand of ethnographic scholarship (although marginal) on development that tries to do precisely this. This is a critique of Foucauldian appropriations in the study of development and governmental action that, comparatively speaking, privilege governmentality as a project of rule rather than as contingent accomplishments in specific cultural contexts (Li 1999). Mosse's (2005) work can be located in the same strand. Discussing the experience of an externally funded development project in India, he argues that development policy should not be seen as a blueprint that gets implemented; rather, development policy is a contested domain that is constantly produced and reproduced by the competing and contingent pulls and pressures exercised by a varied sets of social actors. In a similar fashion, Li (1999), while discussing the resettlement of an isolated social group in Indonesia, characterises the experience of this community as a compromise, and thus, as neither accommodation nor resistance. Gupta (1998), focusing on farmers in a north Indian village, explores how their hybrid and opportunistic practices as agriculturists involve a constant reworking of the logic of agricultural developments as promoted by the state. Bandyopadhyay (2010, 2009), while discussing the street politics of hawkers in postcommunist Calcutta, shows how such politics is differentiated, and the ways in which a group of hawkers has been able to successfully contest the imperatives of the state by arrogating to themselves, what he calls, the archival function. Appadurai (2001) has shown how NGOs have been able to deepen democracy by globalising from below, and by successfully articulating and mediating the demands of the urban poor. This thesis locates itself in this tradition of ethnographic studies of development that critically engages with the situated practices and imbrications of development as an unfolding process.

From politics of development to the everyday state

Most of the literature in the poststructuralist strand of development theory over-ascribes agency to macro-level institutions and discourses, and obscures the actual operations of

the everyday. It also fails to provide us with a map of the ways in which targets and agents of development are not merely objects of disciplinary power, but also the subjects of its active co-constitution into more productive forms (Li 1999).

Understanding development: from politics to state

To be able go beyond the impasse of extant development theory one needs to shift the focus of the analytical gaze from politics, or development politics in this specific instance, to the state itself. Most of the extant literature on development that studies it ethnographically has focused on 'politics' and not the state per se. This is because, as some scholars have argued (Dhareshwar 2010; Subramanian 2009), politics in the Indian context has for its domain claim-making upon the state. This is not to reduce politics to the realm of the state, but to posit that if 'the state' continues to remain the political actor *par excellence* and remains the node around which politics in the form of claim-making takes place, then there is a need to understand the ways in which the state itself is morphing. Another imperative for marking such morphings is a reason that Srirupa Roy (2007) puts forth in a slightly different context: unlike in modern Europe where there was a temporal lag between the formation of the nation and the creation of the modern nation-state, the nation and the state came to be simultaneously constituted in postcolonial India and in many other parts of the Third World. Therefore, in postcolonial India, 'the political' trails the state. Despite narratives surrounding state withdrawal, the state even now remains the development actor par excellence. Thus, there is a need for good accounts of how state-led development works on the ground.

Passive revolution: a dominant theoretical paradigm

In the Indian context, the theoretically dominant accounts of the state and the political in India have come from political theory and history and not from sociology or social anthropology. This literature runs the danger of turning the state into a master concept that is then expected to carry a large explanatory charge (Fuller and Harriss 2000: 10). Ethnographic discussions surrounding the state have traditionally focused on politics in

tribal and peasant societies, and the development of modern state forms in these societies (Gailey 1985). Till very recently the discipline has not focused on the workings of the modern state, and the ways in which it is experienced by its subjects. This has been true in the case of social anthropology/sociology of India as well. In the immediate postcolonial period ethnographic works by F.G. Bailey, Anthony Carter and M.N. Srinivas, among others, focused on politics rather than on the state in India (Fuller and Harriss 2000: 10–14).

But the dominant narratives surrounding the Indian state originate in the discipline of political science. In the immediate aftermath of decolonisation the discipline was preoccupied with questions surrounding tradition, modernity and development, and concerned itself with interactions of modern political institutions of state-making with 'traditional' sources of identity such as caste, ethnicity and region. A large part of this literature was of American provenance, although Indian scholars such as Rajni Kothari played an important role in this conjuncture. From the mid-1980s, with the work of scholars such as Partha Chatterjee and Sudipta Kaviraj, the subject of analysis changed from nation building to the fragmentation of the national project. This was accompanied by work in other disciplines that interrogated the state; for example, the psychologist Ashis Nandy and the sociologist T.N. Madan critiqued the statist project of secularisation as being related to the growth of communalism in India over the last 25 years or so, whereas critiques in the discipline of economics brought into sharp focus the alleged inefficiencies of the developmental state (Menon 1999).

Coming from within the discipline of political science, one dominant and productive theoretical strand of looking at the state in India has been the one that is identified with the work of Chatterjee (1999a, 1999b) and Kaviraj (1988), and can be called the 'passive revolution thesis'. Borrowing from Gramsci's idea of historical block, the theorists of this school argue that the inability of the postcolonial nation-state in India to undertake a bourgeois-led transformation of Indian agriculture and Indian society can be characterised as *passive revolution* (ibid).

Passive revolution was a concept of Gramscian provenance, and it arose out of a specific conjuncture in Italian history where the absence of a bourgeois-led revolution and the growth of fascism needed to be made sense of. Passive revolution as a category in this context has two important markers. Negatively, this concept sets out the absence of a bourgeois-led revolution in Italy. Positively, it is an explanation of how hegemony is established through the building of a broad-based class coalition with the bourgeois functioning as the nucleus, and the older feudal classes being reduced to a governing class from an earlier position of dominance (Gramsci 1997). After Gramsci, many scholars, especially in postcolonial societies, have tried to engage with the processes of social transformation and political change through the ideas furnished by him. The idea of passive revolution has been marshalled by these scholars to explain the incomplete transitions of their societies into capitalist modernity (Morton 2003; Tuğal 2009; Gray 2010; Simon 2010).

Passive revolution, state and political society in India

In India one of the most widely cited and used descriptions of passive revolution to understand the dynamics of postcolonial politics is given by political theorist Sudipta Kaviraj (1988). He used a coalitional class model to make sense of state and politics in India after decolonisation. He tried to show how the bourgeois-led dethroning of the older feudal classes in postcolonial India from an earlier position of exclusive dominance can be characterised as passive revolution.[4] The temporal location in the morphing of the state and politics in India is located around decolonisation, that is, in the period 1945–1952 (ibid).

The body of scholarship on the state in India that applies this extension of the passive revolution thesis to the Indian case has been influential. It reflects and has consolidated three broad kinds of theoretical orientations in social sciences in India concerning the state. First, debates surrounding the state in India have happened around

[4] For a recent restating of this position with the first amendment to the Indian Constitution as a case study, see Menon (2004).

its ‘nature’. Second, it has displaced questions surrounding the state into the realm of politics. Third, it has led to a historicist bias (that looks for historical continuities in the workings of the state), and sees decolonisation as a significant watershed.

A particularly important and influential extension of the passive revolution thesis in terms of understanding the state in India has been the political society formulation by Partha Chatterjee. The way Chatterjee (2004) argues out the theory of political society is by constructing a narrative of difference through dichotomies such as the First World and the rest of the world, civil society and political society, citizens and populations, corporate capital and non-corporate capital. Political society is the scaffolding that holds up this theoretical architecture by allowing the elaboration of this narrative of difference. In contemporary India, according to this formulation, the communities that are targets of governmental action for the purpose of the perpetuation of passive revolution constitute ‘political society’, whereas members of the bourgeois and the forms of associational politics that this class indulges in constitute civil society.

Although the theory of political society is an attempt at speedbreaking the seemingly smooth onward march of ‘global’ theories of politics and the political, it often mimics the theories that it tries to challenge, both in terms of the level of abstraction at which it operates and the degrees of explanation that it offers. The question to ask is this, if the dominant way of perceiving and experiencing the state in the non-West does not follow the templates set in the West, is there a generic ‘non-Western’ way of articulation of politics and the political? The work of Partha Chatterjee and other heterodox Marxist scholars suggests a positive answer to this question. The overall argument posited by this formulation is that although the diagnosis of the problem (in terms of theories of state and civil society that are of Western provenance failing to capture political realities in the ‘third world’ countries) is valid, the theoretical solution offered is not adequate.

If politics is the craft of using and abusing the state as undertaken by communities, then these vernacular articulations of ‘politics’ do not happen at the level of the non-West or at the level of the state in India. This happens at the level of specific

regional articulation of perceptions and experiences of the state as the peculiar mode of creation of the nation-state in India is conjoined by the vernacular and the regional in a foundational sense (Kaviraj 2010b). One such vernacular articulation is detailed in Chapter VI of this thesis, and is offered as a corrective to the political society formulation.

Going beyond passive revolution: the promise of ethnography

One way of providing a corrective is to change the methodological stance from a historical to an ethnographic one. Hence the literature which this thesis engages with and locates itself in is the newly emergent ethnographic scholarship on the everyday state in India. Over the last two decades the work of scholars such as James Manor, Paul Brass, Akhil Gupta, Barbara Harris-White, Robert Wade and Jonathan Parry has taken the state itself as an object of study and analysis by focusing on the various omissions and commissions by which the workings of the state play out on the ground, and the ways in which such actions are perceived and imagined by people (Fuller and Harriss 2000: 10–14). This thesis and its arguments are located within this broader ethnographically-oriented literature that takes the state itself as an object of study.

Apart from this literature on the everyday state, over the last decade or so, there has been the growth of a literature surrounding postcolonial governmentality in India that can be seen as addressing these sets of problems. These appropriations from 'late Foucault' and his productive notions of power and governmentality have been used to explain the differential demographic trajectories of religious communities (Jeffery and Jeffery 2005), the production of docile, individuated work forces in the spaces of the new economy (Gooptu 2009), the production of environmental subjects through participation (Agrawal 2005), the unwitting production of politicisation and empowerment by strategies of neoliberal governmentality (Sharma 2006) and the production of civic governmentality through technologies of governing and norms of self-rule (Roy 2009). These scholars take debates surrounding the state in India forward by critically examining the tactics of doing government and people's perceptions and experience of it. But there

have generally been very few accounts of the actual morphings of the state on the ground. Studying these is also methodologically helpful as this move makes multiple ethnographic sites available for studying 'the state', its effects, and the way governmental programmes and policies get shaped (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Ferguson and Gupta 2002).

Borrowing from de Certeau (1988) this thesis argues that to study the state as it morphs on the ground one cannot use only statistical abstractions or merely give accounts of the 'distortions' produced in 'the state' by 'the social' (this is the position of most 'institutional' perspectives on Third World states). What one needs to do is to undertake an act of ethnographic interrogation of the state complicit in the act of developing. This refocusing on the everyday state with a methodological stance of multisited ethnography helps make sense of the perceptions and practices of beneficiaries and agents of the state's projects and the way they make sense of these projects (Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005).

III. Rationale of the study

The ways in which the postcolonial state in India makes itself available to people has undergone many changes in the more than six decades of its existence. Starting from the mid-1980s the 'colonial bureaucratic straitjacket' is overreaching itself to enter society by reinventing organisational forms and modes of operation. It is now making itself available through wall-paintings of discrete projects, as the manager of 'cultural events' in district headquarters, and through many new 'sites' such as details of projects under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on the website of the central Ministry of Rural Development. The formation of various missions such as the National Rural Health Mission and the district and state level watershed development missions for the delivery of governmental services, programmes and projects has been a key development in this regard.

The state is now available in a dispersed manner and is imbricated in the daily life of its citizens. For example, a woman in a village in Kalahandi, might get up in the morning, eat *pakhāla*[5] cooked with rice that she bought for two rupees a kilo in the government ration shop in a neighbouring village, take her three-year-old anaemic child to the nearest *anganwadi* for polio drops, attend a meeting of the Watershed Committee of the village of which she's a member, go to work, and in the evening meet up with women from her clan for the self help group (SHG) that has been formed under the aegis of another government programme. It is not merely that the state is making itself available to communities that it had not reached earlier, it is also getting slowly imbricated and written into the very texture of rural social life. The various governmental missions are playing an important role in this. To make sense of what is happening on the ground what one needs is a ethnographic engagement with the developmental activities of the everyday state.

Since the continuing deprivation in Kalahandi have been framed in terms of failure of public action and governmental interventions, studying an ongoing governmental development project becomes relevant in such a context. The district and the region have also been framed as a land of drought and starvation; studying a water-related intervention is therefore pertinent. Because of these reasons the thesis focuses on an ongoing watershed development project - WORLP – in the district. Such a focus on the everyday functioning of the state is also important from a theoretical point of view.

Since NGOs are increasingly seen as better delivery agents of developmental action (White 1999), including governmental initiatives, this thesis studies two project implementing agencies (PIAs) in the district – one governmental and the other one an NGO – to map the possible differences and similarities with respect to project implementation and everyday organisational practices.

[5] Pakhāla means rice with water. Leftover rice is mixed with water and salt and eaten as a staple in most parts of Odisha, especially during summer. It can be eaten fresh or after being fermented for a day or two.

Apart from this there is also the fact of social scientific neglect of Odisha as a region. One cannot negate or belittle the work of sustained initiatives such as the Orissa Research Project of Heidelberg University, and the work of many Western scholars such as F.G. Bailey and F.A. Marglin. But Odisha as a region has been neglected by mainstream social science academics in India, especially in the last two decades or so (Routray 2008). This study provides fresh points of departure for studying the society and culture of Odisha.

IV. Research objectives

1) To study the framing of Kalahandi as an iconic backward and marginal district and to understand this framing in the context of the broader shifts in governmental action in India.

2) To understand the emergent forms of governmental action on the ground with specific reference to watershed development in Kalahandi.

3) To study the similarities and differences in the interventions of governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with respect to watershed development in Kalahandi.

4) To study the vernacular perceptions of these emergent forms of governmental action in Kalahandi, and to study the state through the forms and perceptions of these governmental actions.

V. Methodology of the study

Methodological strategy

The methodological strategy utilised for the doctoral work was that of multisited ethnography. The general mix of methods used in ethnography such as in-depth unstructured interviews, interviews with semi-structured interview schedule, participant observation, observation, and life histories was used for collection of data. One of the aims of this thesis has been to unravel the ways in which agents of the developmental

state and beneficiaries of its projects make sense of a specific development project, and the ways in which they are able to tactically use the spaces opened up by such a project. To be able to do this, qualitative methods used in doing ethnography have been adopted. Apart from this a varied set of sources on Kalahandi such as archival material, journal articles, academic books, news reports, governmental publications, material produced by an NGO, literary prose and poems produced by writers from Kalahandi were also collected.

Details of fieldwork strategies

For the duration of the study this student shifted base to the district of Kalahandi. Doctoral fieldwork was done in the project sites of two Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) of WORLP: one governmental and one non-governmental[6]. This was done to be able to trace the variations of the work of the project across both these types of organisations. The PIAs were chosen in the same part of the district in two bordering blocks in the same sub-division. They also belonged to the plains area of the district and shared similar geoclimatic conditions. Both these PIAs handled 10 village-level microwatershed development committees (henceforth referred to as Committees in this thesis) each. These Committees are the lowest level functional unit of WORLP, and effective work of the project was undertaken at this level.

In the project site of each PIA, one village was chosen for extensive study. The Committees of WORLP were of two types: some were composed of only one village, while others were composed of more than one village. In both the governmental and non-governmental PIAs, a Committee with only one village was chosen. This was done so as to focus on the way the day-to-day working of the project played itself out in a village. Within these villages, the study tried to understand the social dynamics between the

[6] The NGO PIA was an established NGO in the district with some experience of watershed related work. It has a significant presence in the districts of Kalahandi and Nuapada and in a few other districts in Western Odisha as well. It is headquartered in Bhubaneswar. This organisation, Centre for Development Inclusion (CDI), has been involved in advocacy and interventions with respect to village self-government, and community-based, small-scale natural resource management. CDI is a pseudonym. Because of reasons of research ethics all names or organisations, people and places (sub-district) level in this thesis are pseudonyms, unless specified otherwise.

numerically dominant social groups. The villages having adequate representation of the numerically important *jāti* and tribal groups in Kalahandi were chosen for the study.

A total of 125 interviews with different types of project benificiaries were conducted with a semi-structured interview schedule in the two villages chosen for intensive ethnographic study. Out of these 59 were followed up using the method of in-depth unstructured interview. An additional 95 villagers were interviewed using the same method. Thus, in-depth unstructured interviews were conducted with a total of 154 villagers including project beneficiaries. Apart from this 31 village-level functionaries of the project were interviewed (using the method of in-depth unstructured interviews) with follow ups; out if this 19 were members, secretaries and presidents of the Committees of the two villages under study. 13 PIA-level staff and six district-level staff of the District Watershed Mission, Kalahandi were interviewed (with many follow ups) using the method of in-depth unstructured interview. Three staff members of the Orissa Watershed Development Mission (OWDM) from the state-level office at Bhubaneswar were also interviewed. In addition to these interviews of project related people in-depth unstructured interviews were conducted with two senior members of the district administration not directlurelated with WORLP or DWM, Kalahandi. Thus, in-depth, unstructured interviews were conducted with a total of 54 people from the district administration out of which 52 were directly related to the functioning of WORLP.

29 social activists, politicians, NGO personnel, journalists, and writers from the district of Kalahandi and the greater Kalahandi region were also interviewed, some with follow ups.

Observations were made of 15 monthly meetings of Committees out of which eight took place in the two villages under study. Three district-level review meetings of DWM, Kalahandi were observed. Seven PIA-level review meetings were observed. Two training programmes held under the auspices of DWM, Kalahandi were observed out of which one was a three-day long affair. 15 monthly meetings of SHGs of women were observed in the villages under study.

Apart from observing these formal processes a large part of the ethnographic fieldwork involved watching and following the village-level, PIA-level and district-level staff (related to WORLP and DWM, Kalahandi) doing their routine activities. Often this researcher helped these staff and villagers do their work related to watershed development. Therefore, a large part of the insights gained were through the method of participant observation. For example, he participated in the process of preparing business development plans for the benificiaries receiving small grants under WORLP in one PIA along with other PIA-level staff. Additionally, he participated in and observed the everyday life of the villagers, project benificiaries and lower-level project staff, and the insights gained from these observations were used for analysis of the data collected.

Duration of fieldwork

Doctoral fieldwork was done in the period between June 2008 and February 2010. In the initial months the work involved collection of secondary and archival material at various private and public libraries in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack and at Orissa State Archives (located in Bhubaneswar), and in making pilot field trips to Kalahandi. During this 19 month period fieldwork using ethnographic methods was done across six sites: Bhawanipatna (the district headquarters of Kalahandi), the project sites of both the government and NGO PIAs, the two villages chosen (one each in the two PIAs) and in Bhubaneswar.

Apart from intensive ethnographic work done in the two chosen villages, extensive amounts of time were spent in the offices of these PIAs, as well as in other villages of the Committees that these PIAs had to manage. The largest part of the time was spent in living in the two villages chosen for intensive study followed by block-level PIA offices and the living quarters of their staff, and then at Bhawanipatna, the district headquarters of Kalahandi.

VI. Key concepts developed by the researcher and introduced in the thesis

Logic of concept development

This researcher introduces six key terms in this thesis; these are state-fabrication, regimes of state-fabrication, modes of state-fabrication, logistics of state-fabrication, tactics of state-fabrication, and toutary. All of these six terms are defined in the sequence listed above as a part of the next sub-section. These terms have been developed by this researcher as a part of an exercise of concept building by using ethnographic data to make better sense of people's own practices and perceptions related to the state. Since these could not be explained adequately by using the conceptual languages of state formation, the notion of fabrication has been used to describe processes and effects of forms of governmental action. Often senior governmental staff of WORLP would try and monitor the activities of PIA-level staff of the project in terms of the number of SHGs and families of beneficiaries that the latter had been able to 'touch' (in original Odia) over a certain duration of time. Often villagers and project beneficiaries would talk in terms of certain governmental interventions under WORLP in their villages or in neighbouring villages as being or not being ākhi drusiā (eye-catching or visible). The persistence of the framing of the actions of the state and the perceptions of people of these actions in terms of a certain sensory metaphor led to the development of the concept of regimes of state-fabrication in terms of regimes of visibility and tactility. Similarly, a large part of the vocabulary that the staff (both senior and junior) of WORLP used for describing their work practices involved the language of logistics – operation, strategy, tactic, proper targeting etc. Thus, this researcher introduces the term logistics of state-fabrication based on analysis of such usages of certain terminologies and related practices. Similarly toutary is a word that villagers cutting across various social axes and project staff of WORLP used very frequently to frame their own perceptions and practices related to the state. Thus, these six concepts developed by this researcher and introduced in the thesis were developed through a process of ethnographic engagement and analysis of qualitative material collected through this methodology.

List of concepts with definitions:

1. *State-fabrication*

   Narratives of about the state are generally framed as narratives of state formation. These discussions often of a Marxist and/or structuralist provenance, tend to discuss what they see as the nature of the state, and see the state as reflecting a certain class dynamic and class coalition in society (Joseph and Nugent 1994; Sayer 1994; Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005). In this context, this thesis takes a self-consciously poststructuralist turn, and tries to displace questions surrounding state-formation by providing descriptions of state-fabrication. In doing this, it borrows from the understanding of gender as fabrication as formulated by feminist scholar Judith Butler (1988; 1999). According to Butler (1988: 528) 'Genders, then, can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent.' Further - 'that the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality' (Buter 1999: 173). Following Butler, this thesis argues that questions surrounding the state need to shift from concerns surrounding its nature and its ontological status to the various acts that constitute it.

   Accounts that have tried to bring the state back as an object of enquiry have tried to study it as an actual organisation. These approaches have in turn been critiqued for not taking into account the boundary problem between state and society. Instead powerful poststructuralist arguments have been made to see the state as a structural effect of practices that make the state appear to exist (Mitchell 1991). But even seeing the state as an effect of actions sees it as being separate and distinct from these actions. Therefore, here the parallels with Butler's notions of fabrication to understand gender are of help. Butler does not merely argue that gender is an effect of a set of actions; instead she argues for a notion of gender that is constitutive of these actions. Therefore, the analytical move that Butler makes is to shift the focus from body to performativity (Buter 1988, 1999). It is in this sense that this thesis sees the state as being fabricated and not as being

formed by trying to shift the focus of debates from the body[7] of the state and its nature to the actions that seem constitutive of it and the forms and other characteristics of governmental action. Hence, it describes processes of state-fabrication rather than state-formation.

2. *Regimes of state-fabrication*

   Regimes of state-fabrication refer to the perceptual domain of the processes through which state is fabricated. In other words regimes of state formation refer to the processes by which the state is made available for perception and action by the people. In the Indian context this thesis identifies two such regimes; regime of visibility and regime of tactility.

3. *Modes of state-fabrication*

   If 'the state' is a fabrication then this thesis argues that it can be fabricated in many ways. A mode of fabrication specifically refers to the organisational forms and technologies of government through which such fabrication takes place. In the Indian context this thesis identifies two modes of state-fabrication one of which is the mission mode through which processes of state-fabrication started operating starting in the mid-1980s. This mode of state-fabrication uses social technologies to a much larger extent than the other extant form, the departmental mode of state-fabrication.

4. *Logistics of state-fabrication*

   The logistics of state-fabrication, in a given temporal context, refers to the operational manoeuvre corresponding to a specific regime through which a particular mode of state-fabrication functions on the ground. This thesis identifies two different kinds of logistics – symbolic logistics and quotidian logistics - corresponding to the regimes of visibility and tactility respectively. Quotidian logistics is imbricated in the functioning of mission-mode of state-fabrication.

[7] Here the word body is used with reference to the state in a purely heuristic sense. This usage does not have any commitments towards the ontological status of the state.

Despite the military connotation of the word logistic that refer to operations in a strategic space, logistics of state-fabrication are contingent upon tactical manipulations of time rather than creating strategic spaces that allow for intentionalities to manifest themselves.

5. *Tactic of state-fabrication*

   A tactic of state-fabrication refers to a procedure through which the state is fabricated within a certain logistics. Therefore, a tactic of state-fabrication is not reflective of specific intentionalities; rather it refers to an operational procedure that allow for the coming into being of certain regimes of state-fabrication and makes for certain morphings of the state.

6. *Toutary*

   Toutary is an Odia word that does not have any English equivalent. On being asked about the effects of WORLP villagers would invariably reply that the project has increased toutary in the villages. Most project beneficiaries and lower-level project staff see the growth of toutary as the single most important result of the penetration of the state into village society through interventions such as WORLP. Toutary is a domain of action and perception which lies in the zone of interpenetration of state and village society, and is produced by the very fact of this penetration; the 'state in society' is described as toutary. The social agents that populate this domain are called touters.

VII. Chapterisation

<u>The logic of chapterisation</u>

This thesis provides an extended counter-case to a certain dominant strand of theorising surrounding the state in India which it terms as the passive revolution thesis. It does this by identifying some key aspects of this thesis and building an argument against each one of these strands. The key aspects of this strand of theorising are; (a) in terms of

disciplinarity one needs a historical approach informed by political theory to understand the nature of the postcolonial state in India, (b) the key period of shift in the functioning of the state in India is the period surrounding decolonisation, (c) to make sense of the state in postcolonial India one needs to give an account of politics, and (d) such politics can be understood as operating along a subaltern vs. elite axis with the elites being recognised by the state as proper citizens constituting the civil society whereas the subaltern masses constitute political society.

This thesis provides arguments against all the four key aspects of the passive revolution formulation as identified above. Chapter II of this thesis locates Kalahandi and the new forms of governmental interventions in the sector of watershed development there in the context of broader changes in the processes of state-fabrication in India. This chapter locates the shift in state-fabrication in the period it identifies as the long eighties (1977-1991), and sees the emergence of the mission mode as a key aspect of the shift in the processes of state-fabrication. But it must be foregrounded here that the understanding of such changes was gained through an extensive ethnographic engagement. Chapter III studies the ways in which Kalahandi has been framed as a district plagued by drought and deprivation, and its emergence as a site for the operations of the mission mode of state-fabrication.

Chapters IV, V and VI draw almost exclusively from ethnographic data, and show the value that an ethnographic approach can have in understanding processes of state-fabrication. Chapter IV gives a formal description of the mission mode of state-fabrication as opposed to a substantive one depending upon descriptions of politics and power. Chapter V traces the effects of such emergent modes of state-fabrication as evidenced through two key processes. Chapter VI shows that the actions and perceptions that frames peoples' interface with emergent forms of state-fabrication operate at a regional level, and in the case of Odisha the vernacular domain of toutary seems to frame the processes and practices surrounding state-fabrication. This chapter provides a counternarrative to the political society extension of the passive revolution thesis.

The schema of chapterisation

Chapter I of the thesis provides a brief introduction to the thesis. It then undertakes a review of relevant literature and then discusses the rationale, objectives and methodology of the study. It also provides working descriptions of the key terms introduced in the thesis by the researcher, and a discussion of the logic and schema of its chapterisation.

Chapter II challenges a key assumption of the passive revolution thesis on the state and politics in India, as exemplified by the work of scholars such as Partha Chatterjee and Sudipta Kaviraj. This scholarship borrowing from the Gramscian tradition locates a significant morphing of state and politics in India during the period of decolonisation, i.e. between 1945 -1952. This chapter shows that more momentous changes happened during the period 1977 to 1991, a period that it calls the long 1980s. The emergence of the mission mode of state-fabrication is a significant aspect of the changes that have taken place during this period. This morphing of the state and the emergence of the mission mode of state-fabrication can be located within a broader process of changes in the functioning of the developmental state (from a regime of visibility to a regime of tactility) and the logistics of state-fabrication governing governmental tactics (from symbolic to quotidian logistics).

The mission mode of state-fabrication can be seen at work in varying sectors of governmental activity including that of watershed development. In the context of Odisha this has involved the formation of the OWDM, a state-level mission and district-level missions such as DWM, Kalahandi for the delivery of various watershed projects and programmes. A large number of these watershed development projects now focus on marginalised areas and communities. This includes WORLP that is specifically targeted at four districts of Western Odisha, including the districts of Kalahandi and Nuapada that formed a part of the undivided district of Kalahandi till the early 1990s. This chapter provides brief introductions to OWDM and DWM, Kalahandi as organisations and WORLP as a project.

Chapter III studies the emergence of Kalahandi as a deprived district ripe for governmental developmental interventions, especially in the mission mode. It traces the various narratives that have framed the discussions surrounding Kalahandi. This chapter argues that Kalahandi emerges around the year 1985 as a marginal area plagued by drought and starvation, a site *par excellence* for the workings of the emergent mission mode of state-fabrication. It gives schematic accounts of the various kinds of narratives that have framed such an emergence. These narratives have diverse points of origin. Some narratives emerge from the media, others from within academy, whereas others come from organs of the state itself. Most of these narratives play the role of framing Kalahandi as a land of droughts, hunger and starvation deaths, as a place where governmental action has failed. Otherwise like narratives produced in the annual souvenir *Kalā jharan* (published by the district administration of Kalahandi), they shift the discussion to the realm of culture by portraying the district as materially poor but as being rich culturally. Therefore, these various kinds of narratives end up constructing Kalahandi as a region that is backward in developmental terms, a region where traditional governmental action has failed and as a region that is in need of new kinds of responses by the government. It is in this context that the choice of watershed development and DWM, Kalahandi as objects of study assume importance as they provide us with key sites to study and understand the operations of this emergent mode of state-fabrication that attempt at rectifying the problems associated with earlier kinds of governmental actions.

Chapter IV extends the argument made in Chapter II that over the last two and half decades there has been the growth of the mission mode of state-fabrication in India involving the growth of various missions in a large number of sectors of governmental activity such as health, education, livelihoods and natural resource management. This chapter provides a formal account of the process by giving details of the tactics through which the state has been morphing. In the contexts of the social world and the sector that this thesis deals with, that is, Kalahandi and watershed development through WORLP, the changes brought about by the mission mode of state-fabrication can be understood through five principal tactics of operation. The first one is that of **multiplication** of nodes

of contact with society, the second is the **expansion** of the body of the state by incorporation of other types of organisations such as NGOs into the ambit of the state, the third is **pluralisation** of logics of governmental actions, the fourth is that of **provisionalisation** of governmental practice, and the fifth is **textualisation and visibilisation** of governmental processes. This is not to say these are the only tactics that are available, or that these five are always dominant, but that in this specific context these five seem to give shape to governmental practices and perceptions of people of the state. But the deployment of these tactics, by allowing for the transformations of the body of the state, opens up spaces for articulations of practices and logics of a variety of social groups.

Following the overall theoretical and methodological turns detailed in chapters I, II and IV, Chapter V shifts discussions surrounding the politics of various social groups and the way they make claims and act upon the state to a discussion surrounding the effects of tactics of state-fabrication. This chapter showed that two key effects of the mission mode of state-fabrication through the quotidian logistics are the growing convergence between governmental and non-governmental organisations and the emergence of 'the social' as a site, object and trope of governmental action.

This chapter details the creation of new village-level institutions such as microwatershed development committees, user groups, and self-help groups, as well as the incorporation of civil society organisations such as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) into the ambit of the state. These processes help the governmental apparatus to be imbricated deep inside hitherto marginal rural areas and communities, and have led to the growth of 'the social' as a terrain and object of state-fabrication as identified by local agents of governmental action. One effect of such emergent forms of state-fabrication has been that of convergence. By ethnographic comparisons of the workings of one governmental PIA and one non-governmental PIA of WORLP, this chapter shows that there is an increasing convergence in the workings of governmental and non-governmental organisations in terms of profile of the staff, and everyday practices.

Chapter VI shows that the practices and perceptions of people related to the state, especially those associated with the state-fabrication in the mission mode as exemplified in projects such as WORLP, are framed through toutary. Toutary is a localised, region-bound, vernacular social domain of action and perception related to the state that has emerged out of the penetration by the state into village society, which has intensified under the mission mode of state-fabrication. This chapter shows that it is not always necessary to introduce theoretically over-determined categories such as political society or moral society to be able to provide descriptions of state–society relationships with respect to emergent forms of state-fabrication. Vernacular categories such as toutary can help us with such descriptions as well. The popular narratives surrounding toutary as a domain and touters as social agents also have an analogical resonance with people's perceptions of other domains of sociality such as that associated with the local deities.

Toutary does not merely frame people's perceptions and practices related the state and its agents. Narratives surrounding it provide a space for an ethical critique of the expansionary developmental state. Narratives of corruption are attempts at restoring the idea of normative state practice. But stories of toutary rupture these normative narratives by positing a vernacular domain of ethical critique, if not of ethical practice. Thus, this discussion surrounding toutary enables to undertake a cartographic exercise of state–society interactions that go beyond the standard formulations of corruption and/or state-failure.

Chapter VII summarises the arguments of the thesis, and shows how the various insights developed in the preceding six chapters coalesce into a broader critique of the dominant passive revolution strand of theorising the state in India. It argues for theorising that takes into account vernacular perceptions and practices related the state. It restates the advantages of an ethnographic approach towards studying the everyday state, and posits the implications of such an understanding of the state in India for 'underdeveloped' regions such as Kalahandi. In the final section of this chapter, the relevance of the doctoral work is shown, its limitations are discussed and potential lines for productive enquiry opened up by the doctoral work are listed out.

Chapter II

Emergence of the mission mode of state-fabrication in India

Introduction

The dominant narratives surrounding development and the state in India posit the postcolonial conjuncture as a significant transition point. They also posit the dichotomy and frictions between democracy and development as the most important dynamic that governs the logic of politics in postcolonial India (Bose 1997; Chatterjee 1997a; Kaviraj; 1988, 2010a, 2010c; Nayyar 1998). Broadly the history of development and the state in India has revolved around the debates that surrounded specific projects such as big dams (D'Souza 2006), histories of specific policy institutions such as the Planning Commission,[8] or reflections on broader political processes (Bardhan 1998; Chatterjee 1997b; Frankel 2005; Kaviraj 2010a, 2010c). Apart from focusing on certain key institutions of the developmental state such as the Planning Commission, these and other similar accounts do not provide narratives of how the state itself was fashioned in the aftermath of decolonisation.

The aim of this chapter is to try to begin to offer a different narrative of state, politics and development in India. If one wants to tell a different story, or open up the possibility of other kinds of narratives, then one way of doing this is to introduce a different temporality. There were significant continuities across the colonial divide in India if one shifts the analytic gaze from politics to the state, and tries to map out the actual processes of state-fabrication. This chapter argues that one can locate the markers of a shift in the history of state-fabrication in India during what this researcher calls the 'long 1980s' (stretching between 1977 and 1991) and not during the immediate aftermath of decolonisation during the period of 1945–52.

[8] For accounts of the planning process in India and its institutions, see Hanson (1966) and Chakravarty (1993).

The long 1980s: the need for a refocusing

Because this chapter is looking at the changes in the formal architecture of the state in India and its modalities of operation, the long 1980s assumes salience. This is the period between 1977, when Indira Gandhi's emergency regime was democratically thrown out of office and the first non-Congress government was established at the Centre, and 1991, when the first non-Gandhi/Nehru family Congress party member headed a government at the Centre. It is towards the end of this period that the then Finance Minister Manmohan Singh paved the way to removing regulations that had purportedly stymied economic growth, and took India out of the license-permit raj into the era of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation.

The key events that marked the two ends of this period are significant both in a material and in a symbolic sense. The decision by Indira Gandhi to hold elections, the subsequent electoral losses suffered by the Congress in the 1977 general elections, and the peaceful transition of regimes marked the maturing of democracy in India and the widespread acceptance of the idea and practices of republican, representative democracy, if not of its institutions. This meant that it was now possible to see the workings of the state at the national level as different from the workings and politics of one political party (Guha 2007). But the long 1980s have not been discussed as an important period of our recent history, as is warranted.

For example, Nivedita Menon and Aditya Nigam in their well-argued volume *Power and contestation: India since 1989* (2008) provide us with a picture of the changing dynamics of various aspects of politics and economics in contemporary India including caste, ethnicity, region, international relations and religion. They also frame one significant strand of 'the economic' in this new India as being marked by 'accumulation by dispossession', which is a reworking of Kaviraj's (1988) formulation of the dialectic between democracy and development/bureaucracy as overdetermining the experience of the Indian political. However, this volume completely leaves out the tumultuous 1980s.

While 1991–92 was a significant marker of a new era of liberalisation, a large part of the changes that marked this period had been underway since the time Rajiv Gandhi became prime minister in 1984 (Balakrishnan 1990). So in some sense P.V. Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh did not start a radically new phase but merely consolidated a process that had begun much earlier. The long 1980s marked not only changes that were political in nature, but also changes involving a restructuring of the terrains of the social. The relationships between the social, the political and the economic were renegotiated along with changes in the structuring of the state. So far, the focus of dominant scholars has been to look at the fracturing of the national project/project of the nation-state (Chatterjee 1999b), and then posit why and how the nation-state in India has stayed together as a coherent entity (Guha 2007).

Even when the 1980s get discussed, for example, in *India after Gandhi* by Ramachandra Guha (2007), the focus still remains on political history, and this particular account by Guha stops at a critical marker—the year 1989. Discrete histories exist of the 1980s. For most historians/sociologists the dominant trend of the 1980s was twofold—the extension and deepening of democracy through a process of electoral churning through which a large number of hitherto underprivileged communities came to participate in formal politics (Jaffrelot 2003; Chandra 2000; Kohli 2001) and the almost simultaneous growth of the Hindu Right (Jaffrelot 1998; Nussbaum 2008; Narayan 2009). Thus, the long 1980s have been generally framed by narratives around the restructuring of the terrain of politics in which the Nehruvian consensus surrounding the language and grammar of politics in India seems to be radically disintegrating through various populist attacks.

There is a need to focus on the long 1980s as a lost decade, a decade lost not to action/practice, but to academic theorising in sociology/anthropology/political science/history of the present. There is an urgent need for scholarship on this decade to make sense of our contemporaneity. It is the 1980s that mark a significant acceleration in the growth trajectory achieved in the 1950s (Nayyar 2006). The mid-1980s also mark a

regime change with respect to the Indian stock market, especially the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) (Basu and Morey 1998). This is sometimes attributed to a change of policies starting from the late 1970s that resulted in shifting the economy to a different growth, performance and productivity trajectory (Rodrik and Subramanian 2004; Nayyar 2006). The IT industry also took off during this period, with IT exports growing from a mere $3 million in 1980 to $128 million in 1990 (Dedrick and Kraemer 1993). This is also the period in which the service sector begins to play an important role in economic growth and the imaginary of the Indian economy (Jadhav et al 2005; Joshi 2004).

The 1980s marked the growth of 'techno-populism'—the growth of the telecom industry and the ubiquitous STD booths—often attributed to the policy changes and programmatic interventions of Sam Pitroda, a key technocrat in the Rajiv Gandhi regime during the period 1984–89 (Chakravartty 2004). This period also marked the growth of the television industry with momentous impact as chronicled by Rajagopal (2001). This was paralleled with the rapid growth of the industries related to cultural production, for example, the expansion and maturing of the audio cassette industry (Sundaram 2009). The long 1980s were also the 'decade' in which the Indian middle classes—politically assertive, socially conservative and economically ambitious—grew in number as well as in importance (Mishra 2006).

As has been chronicled by many commentators, this period marked a certain tectonic shifts in Indian politics. India moved away from a single ruling party democracy (at the national level) to a genuine multiparty democratic system through a process of churning that included many hitherto marginalised caste groups getting shares in political power at the state and national levels through opportunistic coalition building exercises (Yadav 1999). Tied to this story has been a radical interrogation of the 'secular' Indian state by the Hindu Right. In the beginning of the long 1980s, BJP had only single digit number of members in the Indian Parliament and marginal political power; towards the end of this it had become the pole around which Indian politics revolved (Hansen 1999). This is also the period that saw challenges to and interrogation of the Indian state from hitherto marginal areas and actors, and various social movements. Challenges to the state

also came from other national imaginaries, most important of them being the Punjabi, Kashmiri and the Naga ones. The long 1980s were the high noon of 'terrorism' with the late 1980s marked with especial viciousness (Metcalf and Metcalf 2006; Guha 2007).

There are partial accounts of all these processes; but all these accounts are accounts of politics, or of political history. There is no single account that sees the long 1980s as a conjuncture that marked a significant restructuring of the Indian social. This thesis tries to argue that one of the important markers of such a restructuring of the Indian social was a reengineering of the formal architecture of the state in India. The geographical point of departure for doing this in this thesis is the district of Kalahandi, and the thematic point of departure is the sector of watershed development.

There to here: regimes of visibility and tactility

As already mentioned in Chapter I, Kalahandi came into public attention in the mid-1980s with the publication of a series of news reports about hunger, starvation deaths and distress sale of children. It is instructive to remember that this happened in the middle of the period of the long 1980s and the transformations in the Indian social referred to earlier in this chapter. To be able to understand the links between these processes, one has to look at the broader terrain of development in India that preceded the long 1980s. One of the dominant tropes that governed actions of the colonial state and the various 'enlightened' native rules of the various princely states was one of 'improvement' (Zachariah 2001; Mann 2004; Gowda 2010). This started morphing into a discourse surrounding development towards the end of the colonial era in the country (Zachariah 2001, 2005; Chatterjee 1997b).

The logic of colonialism in India was based on utilitarian philosophy that justified the colonial occupation of the country by appealing to the material and moral benefits that apparently flowed to India and Indians through such colonial association (Mann 2004). The nationalist challenge in the first quarter of the 20th century produced cracks in such a project, and development started growing as a discourse that helped the late-

colonial governments contain nationalist articulations based on the principles of representative democracy and responsible government. The nationalist position commonly identified with Nehru—that of planned/mixed economy—emerged out of a particular negotiation with colonial modernity. The self-representation of colonialism was that of a modernising force; this meant a large extent of resistance to colonialism was articulated from the terrain of what was seen as tradition. Nehruvian nationalism can be identified with another route to modernity—socialism—which was self-consciously against colonialism and capitalism. Thus, a development imaginary, of the socialist/planned variety, was used against colonialism by the nationalist elite quite successfully. If bringing progress and improvements was the reason colonialists gave for their continuing presence despite nationalist challenges, the nationalist challenge itself became premised upon the promise that a social democratic, national government would be able to deliver development better. The argument against colonialism was as much based on 'ethical' reasons such as the morality of one people ruling over another as it was on the promises of democratic socialism (Kaviraj 1988, 2010a, 2010b; Bose 1997; Zachariah 2005; Gidwani 2008). Thus, there was no necessary discursive opposition between democracy and development at the time of Indian independence; in fact, the very promise of independence and democracy would have been incomplete without 'development' no matter how tentatively defined.

Therefore, during the time of independence the broad conceptual frame of development had already been set up in India. There was consensus amongst the nationalist elite that development was a desirable goal. The socialist experience with planning was seen as a desirable route through which rapid economic growth could be achieved. The Indian National Congress itself had formed groups for economic development plans even before independence. So by the time of independence the development imaginary had become an essential part of the democratic aspirations as articulated by a dominant section of the nationalist elite. This was reflected by a certain institutional architecture as exemplified in the formation of the Planning Commission (Bose 1997; Chatterjee 1997b).

The development imaginary as it congealed during independence saw the whole country as its site and the whole population of India as its target. The first five-year plan that took off in 1952 lacked a clear focus. But by the second plan there was greater alignment between the national development imaginary in India and the international development discourse. The second plan document clearly focused on a dual-sector growth model and focused on industry as the driver of economic growth. Agriculture was 'necessarily' neglected (Bose 1997). This period was characterised by heavy investments in sectors that made the state visible.

As Roy (2007) argues, too much attention has been paid till now to beliefs—or the shared sentiments—that create fictional entities such as nations and the politics attendant upon such creation. But once one focuses on processes of state-fabrication something striking emerges—this process in the immediate aftermath of independence is premised upon creating a certain regime of visibility. Although the investments in capital goods industries and heavy industries (especially steel), large and prestigious higher education institutions and big dams were couched in the language of modernisation and development, their *effect* was in terms of creating a regime of visibility. The logistics of state-fabrication involved in creating this regime was what this researcher calls the symbolic logistics of state-fabrication. In the immediate aftermath of decolonisation the postcolonial state did not reach too deep into village society; instead telltale symbols of its potency and majesty were manufactured through symbolic logistics. These involve, as Roy (2007) details, processes as different and varied as the creation of steel towns such as Rourkela, creation of new pubic rituals such as the Republic Day parades, and the creation of big dams as part of multipurpose river valley projects as all too visible symbols of the existence and majesty of the state.

The actual number of people who might have worked in these steel towns and big dams and other such visible developmental interventions might have been small, and their immediate impact might have been limited. But these structures, in a physical, sensory way, made the state available to people. The state that was distant and almost invisible or rarely visible in a material sense during the colonial era (apart from its

coercive apparatus) was still distant for most people, but it now became increasingly visible through its developmental interventions. From a distant and invisible state there was now a state that was distant, yet visible. Thus, the state was shifted into the regime of representations in a double sense: first, the legitimacy that the state now drew for rule was predominantly through a process of representative democracy. Second, and perhaps equally important, the body of the state morphed in a manner so as to configure a regime of visibility in which the state and its majesty is re-presented through gargantuan public works programmes such as multipurpose dams over rivers (Klingensmith 2007) or public sector steel plants and steel townships. In fact, as some scholars have argued, the steel townships (Roy 2007; Parry and Struempell 2008), and the new higher educational and scientific institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) (Deb 2004) and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) labs (Roy 2007) were as much an investment towards development as they were towards creating a new kind of citizenry for the new democracy, the new citizen who was free of the narrow confines of region, religion and caste and could contribute significantly towards the nation-building process. This regime of visibility could function by redefining the whole of India as a dark land characterised by divisive forces and ignorant masses that needed to be developed. But the act of development was not carried out through consensus or participation of the masses.

The project of development was operationalised through a bureaucratic apparatus inherited from the colonial state. For example, district-level administration was still carried out through the older structures of bureaucracy, with the collector as the district in-charge. The bureaucracy for development multiplied in number, new departments were created under the older ministries, and sometimes even new ministries were created. There was increasing governmental activity in almost all spheres of life; but the form of the state that carried out these activities still operated through the old colonial structure, primarily comprising of departments and boards, despite some ruptures (Chatterjee 1997b; Kaviraj 2010b). Over a period of time, the sheer multiplication of the developmental bureaucracy and overall changes in the Indian social produced certain

morphings of the state that by the long 1980s changed the very logic and logistics of state-fabrication.

Development functioned as a homogenising field during this period in the immediate aftermath of decolonisation in which the whole of India was represented as underdeveloped and as needing improvement and development (Zachariah 2001). By the 1980s cracks started appearing in this discursive field (Gidwani 2008)—the geography of development started being disaggregated into developed and underdeveloped regions. The process of identifying backward districts started from 1960 onwards, but it congealed into official discourse only in the long 1980s. The Planning Commission formed the National Committee on the Development of Backward Areas (Sivaraman Committee) in 1978 that submitted its report in 1981 (Bandyopadhyay and Datta 1989).

With this the process of mimesis through which development operated was drawing to its logical conclusion in some respects. The post-war development regime functioned by dividing the world into the First, Second and Third worlds (Escobar 1995) and India was definitely a part of the Third World. By the long 1980s, the development geography of India no longer appeared as uniformly backward. The development regime had morphed through a logic of differentiation. The same logic of differentiation that converted a teleology of progress into a contemporaneous differentiated spatial geography at an international level, now operated on a national stage dividing the Indian geography into backward districts and non-backward districts. The Sarma Committee report identified the 100 most backward districts in India (Planning Commission 2005).

This was part of a broader restructuring of the Indian social. This restructuring had an important impact on the functioning of the state in India. It meant that the regime of visibility no longer saturated the imperatives of development as representation; the imperatives had changed, and a new mode of state-fabrication had emerged.

Emergence of the mission mode of state-fabrication

In the long 1980s one finally sees the emergence of what this researcher calls the mission mode of state-fabrication. The assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984 brought Rajiv Gandhi into office—the youngest prime minister of India till date. He tried to undo the past legacy of corruption and the initial period of his regime was characterised by promises of introduction of a new era in Indian politics based on a freer economy and rapid technological modernisation (Chakravartty 2004). A significant aspect of this approach was the creation of six technology missions in sectors such as drinking water, immunisation, literacy, oilseeds and telecommunications (Pitroda 1993).The technocrat Sam Pitroda played a key role in this process. This changed approach to governance is termed as 'managerialism,' and the period 1980–89 as an era of techno-populism (Chakravartty 2004). In contrast to such a reading this chapter argues that the growth of missions instead of ending in the eighties has led to the emergence of a specific mode of state-fabrication, even intensifying after this period of time.

Under the prime-ministership of Rajiv Gandhi, the Government of India started the National Literacy Mission for increasing literacy rates in the country (Bordia and Kaul 1992). The older ways of doing development were seen as not producing results fast enough, in a time-bound fashion. The growth of the mission mode has to be seen in this context. Over the last 25 years or so missions at the national, state, and district levels have been formed to govern sectors as diverse as health, education, water and sanitation, horticulture and livelihoods.

With the goal of provisioning safe and accessible drinking water to backward rural areas, the National Drinking Water Mission (NDWM) was started in 1986 that was renamed as the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission (RGNDWM) in 1991 (Planning Commission 2010). The National Horticulture Mission was started in 2005–06 by the Government of India to promote horticulture in India in an integrated manner

(Mittal 2007). Although technically not a mission, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan[9] was launched in November 2000 to universalise primary education, following a conference of state education ministers in 1998 that recommended pursuing this goal in a mission mode. Because it was seen as a special measure, it was funded from a two per cent cess levied on all taxes collected that was later increased to three per cent in March 2007 (Kainth 2006).

The National Rural Health Mission was initiated on 12 April 2005 to address needs of the rural health sector. A key objective for the creation of this mission was to provide support to the creation of the primary healthcare structures in the laggard states. It also tried to factor in the apparent need to incorporate the non-governmental sector to strengthen the public health system to improve access to healthcare by the poor. By 2008–09 the central government had released Rs 28, 408 crore under this mission (Sharma 2009).

The National Solar Mission was launched by the Government of India in 2007 to augment solar powered electricity generation and reduce carbon emissions (Harriss-White et al 2009) that was later renamed as the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission. With the urban poor increasingly in focus and cities being seen as the drivers of economic growth the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) was launched by the new Congress-led coalition government on 3 December 2005 with a proposed investment of Rs 50,000 crore. This was budgeted to be spent in the mission period of seven years beginning with the year 2005–06 (Mahadevia 2006; Kundu and Samanta 2011).

As these examples show, almost all aspects of doing government have been brought under various missions and increasingly large amounts of money have been routed through these missions as opposed to the older organs of the government. The mission mode of state-fabrication is changing the very form of the state on the ground. It

[9] It is a programme of the Government of India. The literal translation of the word 'abhiyan' is 'campaign', and, therefore, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan can be literally translated as the 'Campaign for Education for All'.

has also meant significantly changing the operational conceptualisation of development; instead of a teleology of progress mapped onto some indefinite future, missions are attempts at domesticating developmental time. They have fixed time horizons through which they try and attempt fulfilling specific quantifiable goals.

The mission mode of doing government has involved changing the configuration of the ways in which government functions on the ground and the state is fabricated through quotidian logistics. Detailed accounts of such a process are provided in Chapters IV, V and VI of this thesis. But to discuss briefly here, governmental organisations have started functioning like NGOs in the mission mode of state-fabrication, and there has been a certain provisionalisation of the state. The mission mode radically increases the number of state functionaries on the ground and nodes of contact between state and society. A regime of tactility now started overlaying the extant regime of visibility. The premise of governmental action for development seems to be to 'reach out,' and 'touch' as many lives as possible. What this means is a new focus on hitherto unreached communities and 'backward' regions such as Kalahandi that are then 'targeted' with the deployment of governmental tactics. The increasing nodes of state–society interaction seem to be premised upon the logic of creation of a regime of tactility.[10]

The logistics of state-fabrication, therefore, seems to have shifted from a symbolic to a quotidian one, involving tactics that allow the state to shed its symbolic majesty and come into routine contact with marginal communities and regions. While the symbolic logistics of state-fabrication was dependent on 'scientific' technologies, the emergent

[10] It of course does not mean that one mode of state-fabrication has completely supplanted another mode. As opposed to the structuralism implicit in the passive revolution formulation and its extension with respect to political society, this thesis has taken a deliberately non-structuralist approach. This approach deliberately takes the present and the most immediately available layer of state-fabrication as the starting point and then works downward. Each passing layer shapes the understanding of the subsequent one. So in terms of legibility of social practices and processes, this approach presupposes that institutions and processes do not supplant each other. Each layer, to use a visual metaphor, refracts our understanding of the other and thus contains the other. Thus, the argument offered is that, the mission mode of state-fabrication, the regime of tactility, and the quotidian logistics of state-fabrication have not supplemented the departmental mode of state fabrication, the regime of visibility, and the symbolic logistics of state-fabrication associated with it. The emergent modes have added just another layer to the fabrication of the state. Because our vantage point is the present, the modes with more recent temporal points of origin assume a slightly greater salience.

quotidian logistics depends upon social technologies such as self-help groups, microcredit, and microwatershed development committees for its operation.

The narrative that has framed the processes discussed in this and the previous two sections is the failure of the older developmental state (Gidwani 2008). The 1980s were the decade that bought forth criticisms (nationally as well as internationally, from academic and activist quarters) that development is a god that had failed (Sachs 1992; Escobar 1995; Scott 1999). A central claim was that despite more than around four decades of development planning, matters on the ground in significant parts of India and in many key sectors had not changed much (Byrd 1990).

Watershed Development in India: growth of the mission mode

As detailed earlier in this chapter, the period around the gaining of independence in India was characterised by the growth of statist interventions in science and development. Spectacular developmental initiatives such as multipurpose river valley projects became one of the dominant ways through which the state was visibilised (Klingensmith 2007). Over the last two and half decades or so the canal-oriented, water resources development framework based on big dams in the water sector has been increasingly critiqued by social scientists and social movements (Dhawan 1989; Singh 1990). The watershed approach is increasingly important as an alternative to mitigate the adverse effects such as loss of biodiversity and large-scale displacement of communities that characterised the water resource development approach involving big dams (Mehta 2000, 2005).

In 1974, following the recommendations of the National Commission on Agriculture, the Desert Development Programme (DDP) was started in 1977 – 78 (GoI 1994). During the 1970s and the early 1980s, the performance of watershed development programmes was measured primarily through biophysical indicators such as vegetative cover and water tables. The second half of the 1980s saw changes in the priorities with focus shifting from measuring progress through mostly biophysical indicators to the more overtly social concerns such as ensuring livelihoods, and broadening participation

(Turton 2000). The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) at the national level became the nodal ministry for watershed development in the early 1990s. One of its chief initiatives was the notification of Common Guidelines for Watershed Development in 1994. This was part of a larger change in orientation towards participatory watershed management in India. Many NGOs such as MYRADA and donor agencies such as DFID played an important role in this change. The new approach emphasised community participation, promotion of livelihoods, and poverty alleviation (Chhotray 2007).The Common Guidelines were revised in 2001 and again in April 2003 which were then renamed as the Hariyali Guidelines. With these modifications in place watershed development has become of pivotal interest to governmental initiatives in rural development (GoI 2006). Priorities in watershed development have shifted from their biophysical moorings towards a strategy for livelihood protection in dry-land areas of the country (Hanumantha Rao 2000).

This has been parallel to the growth of watershed missions at the state and district levels for the delivery of these new generation watershed development projects (Baviskar 2004). The implications of such a change of focus needs to be understood. The thesis attempts to do this by drawing upon ethnographic fieldwork done in WORLP, a project with an explicit livelihood focus handled by the state-level OWDM being implemented in Kalahandi. The following three sections give some background information about OWDM, and DWM, Kalahandi as organisations, and about WORLP as a project.

OWDM

OWDM was formed as a society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 under the Department of Agriculture, Government of Odisha (GoO) to manage all watershed projects in the state of Odisha. OWDM has managed watershed development projects under various central government schemes such as the IWDP, DPAP, ACA, NWDPRA, EAS and WORLP with more than 3000 watersheds being managed by it as of March 2007. The majority of these watersheds are located in the undivided Kalahandi, Bolangir,

and Koraput districts in South-West Odisha, popularly known in civil society and policy circles in India as the 'KBK belt' (WORLP nd).

OWDM is supposed to play an advisory and guidance role to facilitate programme execution. It is headed by a director who is the executive head of the Mission and he is helped by experts in various subject matters, management experts, and consultants with thematic expertise. At the district level, the Collector of the district is the leader of the District Watershed Mission (DWM). But the effective head of the DWM is an executive person designated as project director (PD) who is expected to implement watershed development activities at the level of the district and below supported by the Assistant Project Directors (APDs). At the block level the various watershed projects are implemented by the various Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs). The Watershed Development Team (WDT) is supposed to be a team consisting of members with technical expertise in areas such as agriculture and civil engineering in order to facilitate the implementation of the various projects being handled by the PIAs. Below the level of the block, committees are formed for microwatersheds by the PIAs incorporating one or more villages with some involvement by the local communities (ibid).

WORLP

Increasingly, watershed development, especially with the new focus on livelihoods, is seen as an appropriate developmental intervention in regions perceived to be predominantly consisting of dry-land areas such as Kalahandi. In such a context WORLP, a watershed development project that is operational in Kalahandi and is promoted by the Government of Odisha (GoO) and the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID). It follows a watershed plus approach. It is a ten year project that started in the year 2000 in 14 blocks in Bolangir district and five blocks in Nuapada district. In January 2004 the project was expanded to four blocks in Bargarh district and six blocks in Kalahandi district. Thus, the project has been operational in 29 blocks across four districts in Western Odisha. In these 29 blocks, a total of 290 microwatersheds were covered, with ten microwatersheds in each block. Theoretically,

each microwatershed is supposed to have an area of 500 hectares, and the total funds available for watershed related activities for this area are Rs 4.75 million. According to the provisions of the project Rs 6000 per hectare is available for watershed activities whereas Rs 3500 per hectare is available for the watershed-plus/livelihood-related activities. The total cost of the project is Rs 2300 million; of this Rs 1400 million have been budgeted for watershed and watershed plus activities whereas Rs 900 million have been budgeted for other activities such as capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, and project management (CRD n.d.).

The project is managed by OWDM at the state-level whereas at the level of the district the DWM, Kalahandi manages the project, with the PD as the head. WORLP is operational in six blocks in Kalahandi; these six blocks are Bhawanipatna, Golamunda, Kesinga, M. Rampur and Narla and Koksara. Out of these six, in three blocks the PIAs are NGOs and in the other three the project is being managed by governmental PIAs. Each PIA manages ten microwatersheds, and the total number of microwatersheds being managed by DWM, Kalahandi under WORLP is 60. Since some committees incorporate multiple villages the total number of villages under WORLP in Kalahandi are 124, and the total treatable area in the district under the project is 33464.18 hectares. The project team at the level of the PIA has Watershed Development Team (WDT) members and Livelihood Support Team (LST) members. One of the WDT members is in charge of the 'social' aspects of the project, and is primarily involved in managing the livelihood and social aspects of the project's activities (ibid).

Each microwatershed (consisting of one or more villages) is managed by Committees that are the primary level of the project responsible for the execution of the watershed development work. These Committees have been registered legally as societies under the Societies Registration Act of 1860. Each Committee has a president, a secretary and committee members. Each Committee is required to have four community link workers (CLWs) in functional areas such as agriculture and natural resource management to assist it in the work; one of the CLW posts is that of the CLW social.

The households in the project villages are divided into four categories before the commencement of the actual project activities; these categories are - very poor, poor, manageable, and well off. Using these categories the households are given numbers and are colour coded. The project has four broad heads under which activities take place - administration, community development, natural resource management (NRM), and the watershed plus component comprising of revolving fund (RF) and grants. In the last category of project activities, SHGs of women get loans at zero percent interest for livelihood generation activities. Grants ranging from 4,000 to 7, 000 rupees are supposed to be given to households under the very poor and poor categories in order to help them enhance their livelihood options.

DWM, Kalahandi

DWM, Kalahandi is a district-level mission in Kalahandi that has the overall charge of overseeing and implementing watershed-related projects in the district. It has a three tier structure. At the district level the mission manages all the watershed-related projects in the district and is headed by a PD. The PD is supposed to be supported by four Assistant Project Directors (APDs) who deal with specific aspects of the mission's work such as Monitoring and Evaluation (MnE). In addition, the PD is supported by members of the Capacity Building Team (CBT). The CBT is not a feature of all the district-level watershed missions. They are a part of the project architecture of WORLP, and are expected to build capacity of the mission to specifically deal with the watershed-plus component of the project. But in actual practice the CBT members end up doing work for the non-WORLP projects as well.

At the block level the various watershed projects are implemented by the Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs). Each agency is headed by an officer who is referred to as the PIA-in-charge. If the PIA is a governmental one then the officer in charge is, more often than not, an officer on deputation from the soil conservation department. If the PIA is a non-governmental one, then the officer in charge is the head of the local field office of the NGO. At this level the PIA-in-charge is supported by a Watershed Development

Team and a Livelihood Support Team. A large part of the work of DWM, Kalahandi consists of overseeing the works of the PIAs and the Committees.

Conclusion

This chapter has tried to challenge a key assumption behind the passive revolution formulation surrounding the state in India and its political society extension. This scholarship locates a significant morphing of state and politics in India during the period of decolonisation, that is, during the period 1945-1952. This chapter has shown that more momentous changes happened during the period 1977 to 1991, a period that the researcher calls **the long 1980s**. The emergence of the mission mode of state-fabrication is a significant aspect of the changes that have taken place during this period. This morphing of the state and the emergence of the mission mode of state-fabrication can be located within a broader process of morphings in the regimes involved in the functioning of the developmental state (from a regime of visibility to a regime of tactility) and the logistics of state-fabrication governing governmental tactics (from symbolic to quotidian logistics).

The mission mode of state-fabrication can be seen at work in varying sectors of governmental activity including that of watershed development. In the context of Odisha this has involved the formation of OWDM, a state-level mission for the delivery of various governmental projects and programmes in watershed development. A large number of these watershed development projects now focus on marginalised areas and communities. This includes the project WORLP specifically targeted at four districts of Western Odisha, including the districts of Kalahandi and Nuapada that formed a part of the undivided district of Kalahandi till the early 1990s. This chapter has provided brief introductions to OWDM and DWM, Kalahandi as organisations and WORLP as a project.

Parallel to the organisational changes with respect to the state and the emergence of the mission mode of state-fabrication have been processes of framing of specific

regions and communities as sites of governmental activity. In this respect certain regions such as South-West Odisha and within it the district of Kalahandi are especially important. Kalahandi, over the last two and half decades has been used as a metaphor for starvation and destitution in India. The next chapter studies the various narratives that have framed Kalahandi as a deprived region ripe for governmental developmental interventions, especially in the mission mode.

Chapter III

Framing Kalahandi as an iconic backward district

I. Kalahandi: an introduction

As discussed in Chapter II, an aspect of the changes taking place in the long 1980s and the attendant processes of state-fabrication, was the framing of certain districts as backward, and therefore suitable for intensive developmental interventions. One of such districts that have been under-studied is Kalahandi. It is perceived to be one of the most backward districts in India. It forms a part of a broader region in the South West part of Odisha called the KBK (taking the initials of the undivided districts of Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput) region that is characterised by widespread poverty, lack of health and other public services, and low levels of attainments in terms of socio-economic indicators (Dash 2007). The district occupies the southwestern portion of Odisha[11], bordered to the north by the districts of Balangir and Nuapada, to the south by the districts of Rayagada and Koraput, to the south-west by Nabarangpur, to the west by the districts of Nabarangpur in Odisha and Raipur in Chhatisgarh, and to the east by the districts of Rayagada and Kandhamal in Odisha.

Tribal groups comprise a major proportion of the district's population with their share at around 28.65 percent of the total. The other numerically significant demographic group, the Scheduled Castes comprise 17.67 percent of the population (Banik 2008).The area of the district is 7, 920 square kilometres, and it has a population of 1, 573,054 according to the 2011 Census of India[12] (Sethi 2011). The present district of Kalahandi was an eponymous princely state. The district was earlier known as Mahakantara (Great Forest) in ancient India. It was also known as Kamala Mandala, which can be translated as lotus or prosperous region. The district is primarily agricultural and industry is very limited, but bauxite and graphite deposits have been commercially exploited (Pati 1999).

[11] For location of the district of Kalahandi in the state of Odisha please refer to Appendix 1.
[12] For a detailed demographic profile of the district of Kalahandi please refer to Appendix 2.

Since the mid-1980s, Kalahandi has hit the headlines in newspapers regularly for the repeated drought situation and for reported starvation deaths and child sale. This has led to it becoming a favorite site for development projects including the famous KBK project initiated by the government of India in 1994. There has been a significant and increasing presence of Non-Governmental Organisations in the district (Nayak 2002). But, despite such interventions and programmes, the condition in Kalahandi continues to be one of deprivation and distress.

This has to be contrasted with facts such as these: 1) the average annual rainfall in Kalahandi is higher than the national average; 2) the per capita production of food grains in the district has generally been higher than the Indian average for most of the years for which data is available; 3) Kalahandi is a net exporter of food grains; 4) Kalahandi is one of the major contributors of rice to the Food Corporation of India (FCI) in Odisha. As these facts show, the socio-economic deprivation in Kalahandi has been 'naturalised' (Prasad 2001). The deprivation is portrayed as a result of its geography (lack of water) and the consequent droughts. This in turn ignores the political economic reasons for the continued marginalisation of the region and its people that has led to the framing of Kalahandi as needing development. There is an obvious contradiction between the framing of Kalahandi as drought-prone and being backward due to 'natural' reasons, and the realities of the district (Sainath 1996). The contradiction is glaring, and the persistence of the dominant discourse needs to be interrogated[13].

Kalahandi is generally seen as a drought-prone district. This is perceived as resulting in resource degradation and the concomitant erosion of livelihood opportunities. Politics in the district is seen as focusing on the logistics of elections than tackling issues of deprivation. Many development programmes are seen as being launched without taking into account basic underlying causes of poverty and deprivation (Mohanty 1998). Livelihood programmes based on sustainable usage of local natural resources have been advocated as a developmental intervention that can meet the district's needs (Pradhan 1993).

[13] For data on some relevant development indicators of the district of Kalahandi please refer to Appendix 3.

Map of Kalahandi[14]

Emergence of Kalahandi as a metaphor for hunger and destitution

Key to framings of Kalahandi as a land of drought, hunger and deprivation were reports that came out of the Greater Kalahandi region surrounding starvation deaths and distress sale of children in the mid-1980s. Amongst these stories, one of the biggest was that of Phanas Punji, a girl who was apparently sold by her sister-in-law Banita Punji for forty rupees because of distress. After the news broke in the national media, Rajiv Gandhi, the then prime minister, visited the district to have a firsthand experience of the situation.

[14] Downloaded on 30.06.2011 at 20:54 hours from: http://www.worlp.com/kalahandi-Map.htm and then modified.

Most newspaper reports framed the stories of starvation deaths and 'child sale' in Kalahandi as events and not as outcomes of broad structural processes (Sainath 1996).

A report published in the Mumbai-based journal *Economic and Political Weekly* (*EPW*) in 1985, along with other reportage coming out in the national English language press at that time, brought Kalahandi to the public attention by framing the district as the most backward of Odisha's thirteen districts. It went on to reinforce certain key tropes that have since then been consistently used to frame the district and the Greater Kalahandi region; for example, the droughts of the pre-independence period[15] and the droughts in 1954–55, 1965–66, 1974–75 and finally in the year 1985. This report identified the problem in Kalahandi as unequal distribution of productive resources such as land, resource extraction by the state, especially through land revenue and the various forest cesses, and investments in non-productive assets such as TV stations. It also saw the neglect of traditional water harvesting structures and systems as a major reason for the inability of the district to cope with the recurrent bouts of drought. Further, the report argued that the work of both international and local philanthropic and socio-political organisations was not making any headway in addressing the district's problems (Purohit et al 1985).

EPW continued to report and comment on Kalahandi during this period (*EPW* 1987a, 1987b). The year 1987 saw one of the biggest droughts in the history of postcolonial India that also affected this region. However, despite the drought and failure of monsoons, there were no deaths due to famine. Still there were widespread reports of deprivation and misery in the rural areas occasioned by the drought (*EPW* 1988). The newspaper reports covering the region over the last two and half decades or so have been consistently similar in their form and approach. They paint pictures of the district in a style reminiscent of the accounts of Africa in the international media. But this image has not been created by only journals and newspapers; many different sets of actors have been at work in the creation of such an image. The poem at the beginning of the next

[15] Reported in a district gazetteer published in 1980 that does not list its sources.

section points at the multiplicity of the narratives surrounding Kalahandi, a multiplicity that end up producing a somewhat singular effect.

Narratives of Kalahandi

Kalahandi[16]

I was covered in a patchwork quilt of a sari inside the confines of my home.

The one who dragged me away and made me stand in the middle of the hāt[17]*, who shoved his thick fingers in the eyes of the crowd of spectators, and declared my nakedness, he was called a journalist; and now, he owns a two-storied building in the capital.*

The one who searched dusty pages of thick tomes for the causes of my nakedness, who investigated the proportion of salt and sugar in my tears, was called a researcher; his waist size increased by a few inches on the fellowship of the University Grants Commission.

The one who cried pages and pages grieving over my nakedness, stitched words and made stanzas, was called a poet; he got applause, felicitations and awards in the auditoria of five-star hotels.

The one who growled that he would cut the hands of those who had disrobed me, who swore that he would, with his own fingers, weave me a beautiful sari was called a leader of men; he received the throne and the crown.

I, blinded and mute, still stand at the centre of this hāt, with hanging head wearing the same patchwork quilt of a sari.

---Akhil Nayak (2008a: 38–39)[18]

This poem by Akhil Nayak is an indictment, but an insightful one. It captures the creation of a sustained image of Kalahandi that has involved many different kinds of actors such as academics, NGOs, governmental organisations, the media, and litterateurs. This literature is voluminous. The objective here is to examine some indicative texts that give

[16] This poem titled 'Kalahandi' in the original Odia was published in the volume *Dhik* by Akhil Nayak. Although the original poem is in free verse constituting six stanzas, it has been translated as an English prose poem with six paragraphs.

[17] A temporary market primarily set up in rural areas and towns and generally weekly in its periodicity, although bi-weekly or tri-weekly markets are also not unknown.

[18] Translated by Sailen Routray.

us a broad understanding as to the ways in which Kalahandi has been framed and reframed as a district.

Academic narratives on Kalahandi

Although Kalahandi has remained in the public eye for more than a couple of decades now, the total amount of social scientific work on Kalahandi (in terms of academic papers and books, and not MPhil/PhD theses) is relatively limited. The book *Democracy and the state: welfare, secularism and development in contemporary India* (Jayal 1999) was one of the first book-length academic texts in English that discussed Kalahandi. This book focused on the relationships between state, society and democracy in India in the 1980s by picking up three thematic concerns that have been central to the Indian national imaginary—welfare, secularism and development. Jayal maps out the emergence of Kalahandi as a site of welfare concerns of the state (at local, regional and national levels) and sees the persistence of hunger and starvation in the district as a result of the absence of structural socio-economic transformations and the absence of substantive democracy. But Jayal's book did not focus specifically on Kalahandi.

In this section three books that discuss Kalahandi in some detail will be examined. These three are: *The politics of hunger in India: a study of democracy, governance and Kalahandi's poverty* (2000) (henceforth *TPOHII*) by Bob Currie, *Hunger and famine in Kalahandi: an anthropological study* (2010) (henceforth *HAFIK*) by Arima Mishra, and *Starvation and India's democracy* (2008) (henceforth *SAID*) by Dan Banik.

TPOHII was the first academic book to grapple exclusively with the issues of deprivation and hunger in Kalahandi. It locates the experience of poverty, deprivation, hunger and starvation in Kalahandi in the broader context of the historical experience of colonialism and the growth of the developmental state in India in this specific regional context. Located firmly in the discipline of political science, it posits the problem as one of failure of public action creating situations in which there are broadening gaps between public expectations and the delivery of governmental services in Kalahandi. This study

also identified some other key factors such as the difficulty in posting skilled public officials in a district such as Kalahandi. The problem, therefore, at least to some extent, was perceived to be the lack of state capacity (Currie 2000).

Based on fieldwork done in the Greater Kalahandi region, *HAFIK* posits hunger and starvation of Kalahandi within a broader academic literature on famine. It argues that famine should be understood as a *process* and maps out the history of this process by locating the current deterioration in the condition of cultivators and labourers and the patterns of distress migration within a broader framework of history of land and land tenure. But when famine and the state are discussed, only the representations of the state in the form of reports and codes are analysed. It does not deal with the ways in which the state actually functions in specific geographies and is perceived and experienced by the people (Mishra 2010).

Banik's book (*SAID*) is an important addition to the scholarship on Kalahandi. This book brings a much-needed comparative dimension to discussions surrounding Kalahandi—it compares poverty and starvation issues in the district to those prevalent in Purulia (a district with similar demographic composition in West Bengal, another state in Eastern India).[19] He refines Sen's approach to famine and extends it to incorporate the case of Kalahandi. He reads unequal agricultural land holdings, the history of backwardness, improperly targeted social security and anti-poverty programmes, lack of proper healthcare facilities and over-dependence on agriculture as characterising poverty in Kalahandi, leading to the vulnerabilities that result in starvation deaths. He discusses in detail the failures of governmental action, especially of programmes such as the public distribution system, the Integrated Childhood Development Services (ICDS) and the National Mid-day Meals Programme (NMMP). He also discusses the legal interventions, interventions by the press and parliamentary activism surrounding poverty and starvation in Kalahandi, and the inability of such interventions and initiatives to prevent starvation deaths in the district. Banik blames an

[19] Although it must be noted at this point that this comparative dimension is limited, and out of ten chapters in *SAID* only one chapter focuses on Purulia.

unmotivated bureaucracy and non-operational administrative procedures, lack of credibility of the news reports, weak panchayats, lack of effective judiciary, and poverty in thinking in terms of public policy across party lines as being responsible for the situation in Kalahandi. As opposed to Kalahandi, Banik posits that a stable administration and empowered and active panchayats have been able to prevent widespread starvation deaths in Purulia. Thus, even Banik formulates the reasons for the continuing deprivation in Kalahandi as due to state failure; albeit, the failure here is a characteristic of the local/regional state and not that of 'the Indian state' (Banik 2008).

As this brief survey of some key academic tracts on the district shows, there seems to be some consensus surrounding the problem in Kalahandi. The problem is seen as structural, and as having to do with inherently unequal relationships of various social groups with productive forces, especially those related to land. The poverty and destitution in the region is also seen as a result of state failure and a failure of public action, especially that of the local and the regional state.

Narratives on Kalahandi from the print media

The above observations are also true of the narratives produced by media organisations such as newspapers. English language newspapers in particular played an important role in the emergence of Kalahandi as a trope for destitution in India because of their national reach although often stories were broken first by Odia newspapers. English newspapers such as *The Hindu* and *The Indian Express* and periodicals such as *Sunday* and *Illustrated Weekly of India* played an important role in this process (Jayal 1999; Currie 2000; Banik 2008).

But the journalistic narratives that dominantly seem to frame the district are two collections of reportage; the first one is *Everyone loves a good drought* by P. Sainath (1996) and *Diary saga saga* by Tejinder that was published in Hindi by Rajkamal Prakashan in 2004. The importance of these two books can be seen from the fact that both have been translated into Odia. Sainath's book has been translated by Abhay Singh,

and has been published by a leading local NGO, Sahabhagi Vikas Abhiyan. *Diary saga saga* has been re-titled (as *Sujān Tāndira sansāra*) and translated by Abhimanyu Bagarti (2006), and has been published by Lark Books, a leading Odia publisher from Bhubaneswar. During the initial phases of fieldwork in the district headquarters of Bhawanipatna and in a couple of block headquarters, this researcher would often be asked about his research. One of the first pieces of advices offered would be to read the books by Sainath and Tejinder. Instead of being 'reflective' of the 'reality' of Kalahandi they have somehow becomes constitutive of it.

The book by Sainath is a compilation of reports that he filed from 13 of the poorest districts in India out of which four were from Odisha. Out of the four in Odisha, Nuapada and Kalahandi were part of the undivided Kalahandi district. A majority of the reports collected in *Everybody loves a good drought* were initially published in the Times of India, one of the largest circulated English dailies in India. Out of the 68 reports that are collected in this volume, nine are from Nuapada district that was a sub-division of Kalahandi district till the early 1990s. These reports deal with exploitation of farmers and peasants by moneylenders and traders, the crumbling public health system, a misguided dairy development programme, and the problems of migrants. But Sainath takes care to present facets of this region that often escape scrutiny by the media; he tells us a story about a successful case of community protection of forests, and of the hope that small-scale commercial exploitation of native tree species such as Bumar hold for augmenting local livelihoods (Sainath 1996). But in popular perception the story that Sainath tells is that of unremitting misery in Kalahandi. During doctoral fieldwork many venerable and respectable old men, impeccably upper-class and upper-caste, would often complaint about 'negative publicity' about the district, and Sainath's book would often be seen as 'the' culprit.

In the more literary circles, *Diary saga saga* by Tejindar, a journalist, was referred to frequently as being a particularly 'hard hitting', long-form journalistic account of the poverty and destitution of Western Odisha in general, and of Kalahandi in particular. He sees the poor as voiceless and provides 'observations' of deprivation and

destitution that often remind one of Western journalists' descriptions of famine-ravaged Africa. The people of the region that populate the narrative offered by Tejinder are desperately poor, always lack food to eat, are mercilessly exploited by upper-caste/upper-class elites, and have very little agency. The local penchant for festivities (most of which revolve around crops or local deities) is dismissed as another example of the foibles of a passive population for 'religious' nonsense (Bagarti 2006).

This kind of reporting is indicative of most of the stories that come out in national-level publications on the region. This is evident when one analyses a few of the news reports published in *The Hindu* during the period January 2009 to February 2010. During this period there was an epidemic of diarrhoea and dysentery that affected more than 44 villages in the district and left more than 40 people dead. This was extensively covered.[20] In a follow-up article in the newspaper dated 29 January 2010 on children made orphan due to the epidemic it reported, "these children are the new generation of orphans. Deaths due to diarrhoea and malaria are not new to these remote villages of Kalahandi." The newspaper also reported on the politics of bauxite mining and refining in Kalahandi. For example, an opinion piece by Siddharth Varadarajan (13 April 2009) tried to understand local electoral politics, while another report (28 January 2009) detailed the resistance of 'primitive Dongria and Jharnia tribes' to the proposed mining of bauxite in the Niyamgiri hills in the district. Thus, for *The Hindu* Kalahandi continued to remain a remote land plagued by epidemics that sometimes threw up an occasional protest against the onward march of capitalist development.

Poetry from Kalahandi

Parallel to the process of emergence of an image of Kalahandi as a region of starvation and destitution (starting in the mid-1980s), there has been a growth of political and dalit poetry in Odia, with three poets key to such a process of change being from the undivided Kalahandi district. This sub-section focuses on the work of these three key poets; they are

[20] For examples of coverage of this epidemic, see reports in *The Hindu* on the following dates: 16 August 2009, 1 September 2009 and 2 September 2009.

- Basudev Sunai, Akhil Nayak and Bharat Majhi. The work of these poets marks a significant watershed in the evolution of Odia poetry.

The poetry of an earlier generation (for example, as exemplified in poems by poets such as Ramakanta Rath and Sitakant Mahapatra) was marked with 'borrowed' high-modernist idioms and frames such as 'death-consciousness' and myths. The poets from Kalahandi have consciously chosen to write within a tradition that provided an alternative to the one exemplified by Rath and Mahapatra. This alternative tradition saw itself as part of a broader international trend of progressive literature that was politically committed. In Odia poetry, poets such as Sachi Routray and Anant Patnaik were the most significant voices in this alternative tradition (Mohanty 2006).

All the three poets from the undivided district of Kalahandi listed above have chosen to write political poetry that has self-consciously dealt with the contemporary[21]. Through their engagements with the Odia literary-scape by the promotion of identity-based journals such as *Dernā*[22] and progressive journals such as *Nisān*, they have tried to strengthen this trend in Odia literature. These three poets and the increasingly important strand of poetry that they have given birth to now articulates an important subaltern position, especially that of dalits. A key text in this regard is a volume of poetry titled *Asprusya* (Untouchable) by Basudev Sunani that was first published in 2001. This volume has poems of varying quality, some which are emotionally-charged, unadorned pieces of naked anguish. Apart from poetry Basudev Sunani has recently written a book on the dalits of Western Odisha living in the region drained by the River Mahanadi titled *Dalita sanskrutira itihāsa* (2009). The poems of Akhil Nayak are much more understated. He has recently shifted to fiction with perhaps the first dalit novel in Odia published in the pujā[23] issue of the literary journal *Paschima.* This journal has also played a key role in creating a space for politically engaged literature over the last couple of decades or so.

[21] For examples of these three poets' poems refer to Majhi 2007, 2008a, 2008b; Nayak 2001, 2008a; Sunani 1999, 2005, 2007.
[22] Dernā is an irregularly produced journal that for the last decade or so has been trying to create a space for the articulation of a dalit social, political and literary identity in Odia and Odisha.
[23] Pujā issue refers to the special issues of Odia literary journals that are produced on the occasion of the Durgā pujā festival in the month of Asvina (September–October). But generally speaking, the notion of a

A large part of the production of such literature, especially poetry, has involved articulating the experience of being an Odia and a dalit (although Bharat Majhi is not a dalit by birth whereas Akhil Nayak and Basudev Sunani are). Although they occasionally use words commonly used in Kalahandi to remarkable effect, they still use standard Odia as the medium of choice for their poetry. They also work broadly within the tenets and frames of Odia literary modernity that was fashioned in the latter half of the nineteenth century by poets such as Radhanath Ray. Most poems by these poets are free-verse; very rarely if ever, they use the poetic forms used by the subaltern social groups in Kalahandi. Thus, the reaction to the excesses of high modernism has been by making poetry a site for thematic re-articulation, where poems increasingly talk about the brutal experience of subaltern groups of violence by the state and of cultural alienation. But these poets have paid very little attention to the formal architecture of the extant tradition of modern Odia poetry, and have not questioned or challenged it to any significant extent.

The framing of the district of Kalahandi as a geography of hunger sees the relationship between development and politics as an inverse/negative one, and ignores the formal transformations of the state. Similarly the creation of a body of self-consciously fashioned dalit literature has been based on an identity created by caste-based discrimination. This articulation has involved the challenging of the status quo in Odia poetry by bringing politics in as a mere thematic. This relative negligence of forms, of the state in the case of readings of politics of development and the domestication of politics as a mere theme of poetic composition and naturalisation of certain poetic forms are analogically similar processes that occlude understanding of everyday practices.

Literary prose from Kalahandi: memoirs and novels

Kalahandi has produced many litterateurs across generations. Prominent among them have been writers of fiction such as Bhubaneswar Behera and Uttam Kumar Pradhan and

special pujā issue is a bit of a misnomer since more often than not, this is the only issue that most Odia literary journals produce in a year.

playwrights such as Prafulla Kumar Rath. Instead of giving a comprehensive overview of the prose produced either on Kalahandi or of authors from Kalahandi, this sub-section picks a few indicative texts that aid our present discussion. In this regard two novels, a novel titled *Kalahandi O Indra debata* (2005) (*KOID*)[24] and another titled *Bheda*[25] (2008) are discussed and analysed. Apart from this four memoirs/autobiographies by writers from the district: *Gaonra dāka*[26] (1993), *Mo kheleghara*[27] (1998), *Memoirs of a bygone era*[28] (2000) and *Atma kathā*[29] (2001) are also discussed.

The first novel *KOID* is a thinly veiled and fictionalised account of the writer's experience of the 1965–66 drought in Kalahandi. The novel has two distinct narratives that meet each other briefly: one narrative is of the travails of an ordinary peasant family and their village Bhatimunda (near Khariar town of the then Nuapada subdivision of the Kalahandi district) in the drought, and the other of the district and state level responses to the drought situation by politicians, bureaucrats and journalists. The family headed by Kapila leaves for a relief camp run in Khariar as a governmental response to the drought. The story from then on takes a predictable turn. He loses his wife and daughter, and at the end of the drought is only left with his two sons. The daughter commits suicide after she is jilted in love by the contractor who runs the relief work in Khariar. One of the sons then takes revenge by killing the contractor, is captured, and awarded life imprisonment. He later comes back to his village after getting released early to be reunited with a brother who in the meanwhile had migrated to Surat for work and has now come back. The other strand of the narrative focuses on the collector Sundarmohan, Superintendent of Police Sudhiranjan, and a local politician Mardaraj; each one of them, despite different motivations, is shown jostling for space, with the human tragedy caused by the drought

[24] Written by S.C. Mishra, who was the Superintendent of Police of Kalahandi district during an important drought in the period 1965–66. The original novel, titled *Kalahandi and the rain god*, was published in English in 2000. The Odia translation was published in 2005.
[25] The first novel of the poet Akhil Nayak.
[26] Written by the academic, engineer and fiction writer Bhubaneswar Behera. Behera, apart from playing other important roles, was also the vice-chancellor of Sambalpur University at located at Sambalpur, Odisha. This memoir is written in the third person with the narrator being named 'Buddhadeba'.
[27] Written by Odia playwright Prafulla Kumar Rath.
[28] Written by P.K. Deo, the last king of Kalahandi, politician and long-serving Member of Parliament in postcolonial India
[29] Written by a relatively anonymous teacher Kaliprasad Mishra, who is, incidentally, a friend and schoolmate of dramatist Prafulla Kumar Rath.

becoming just another aspect of the unfolding political drama. This novel is then another chronicle of state failure, where even when well-intentioned actions of the state fail because of lack of capacity (Mishra 2005).

The novel *Bheda*[30] details out the story of a father and son duo from a village in Kalahandi; the father is a teacher, and the son is a social activist. Unlike *KOID* which is uniformly written in the standard dialect of Odia, a large number of words used in the local Kalāhāniā dialect of Odia find their way into *Bheda*. Unlike *KOID* that mostly describes events set in the 1960s, the events in *Bheda* self-consciously roll out in the recognisable present. *Bheda* is also consciously more 'political'. Its narrative structure and the way specific events follow from one another seem governed more by the imperative to demonstrate the perceived semi-feudal, semi-colonial character of the state in India than any imperative stemming from the pure force of narrative per se (Nayak 2008b).

In terms of the social origins of the writers, Mishra is a Brahmin from central Odisha, whereas Nayak is a dalit from Kalahandi. The two novels have been written almost a decade apart. But in a remarkable way they are very similar. Both chronicle the failure of the developmental state in India and show, simultaneously, the inability of the state to transform the local social conditions, and the apparent efficacy of its coercive apparatus.

All the four memoirs mentioned in the beginning of this section have been written by people who belong to more or less one generation, the generation that started going to school just before India got her independence. All of them also belong to the two of the dominant castes in the district; Behera, Mishra and Rath are Brahmins whereas Deo belongs to the erstwhile ruling family of the princely state of Kalahandi and was the king of the state at the time of its merger with India. There are remarkable similarities in the ways in which these autobiographies narrativise the district and the state. The most remarkable element of these four autobiographies/memoirs is perhaps this—although all

[30] Literally division but can also mean crack or an intrusion.

these four autobiographies have been published after the period 1985–88 in which Kalahandi came under public gaze because of stories of starvation and child sale, none of these actually engage with these stories in a significant manner. It would seem that the Kalahandi of the 1980s and the Kalahandi these memoirists inhabit are located in two different planets.

But these stories are stories of 'absences' in many other ways as well. Behera discusses in detail the process of becoming an important public figure in Odisha as an academic and as an institution builder; but one finds very little material in this narrative of his life as a writer. Mishra's autobiography has no discussions of what it meant to teach in 'backward' places such as Nuapada and Mohangiri. Rath reveals very little of his family life; this is true of the other three as well.

All the four memoirs/autobiographies are essentially narratives of self-fashioning; of Behera as an engineer and academic, of Mishra as a teacher, of Rath as a dramatist and of Deo as a politician and parliamentarian. Deo narrates the politics of fashioning the regional state in Odisha out of the fragments of colonial geography, and his role in fashioning parties such as Ganatantra Parishad, and his patronage of big statist developmental projects such as the Upper Indravati Project[31]. Behera discusses the processes by which the state is made visible through his personal contributions as an engineer in the construction of the multipurpose Hirakud project on River Mahanadi, and the setting up of the Regional Engineering College at Rourkela (now the National Institute of Technology, Rourkela). Mishra tells the story of the ways in which local politics interferes with the proper delivery of education through the public school system. Rath discusses his experience as a dramatist and the state as a patron of culture. A large part of these narratives, therefore, may be read as narratives of the hidden memories of the Indian state and its various failures and not as mere reflections of individual persons.

[31] The Upper Indravati Project is a multipurpose river valley project on River Indravati, a tributary of River Godavari in peninsular India. This project is one of the first examples of large scale transfer of water from one river basin to the other, in this case from the Godavari basin to the Mahanadi basin.

NGO narrative on Kalahandi

Over the last two and half decades, NGOs—local, regional, national as well as international—have become an important set of social actors in Odisha in general and Kalahandi in particular. With increasing NGO activity in the Greater Kalahandi region, especially by local ones such as Parivartan, Antodaya, Lokadrushti and Sahabhagi Vikash Abhiyan (SVA), these organisations have played an important role in framing Kalahandi. This sub-section takes one NGO, SVA[32] as a case, and discusses some literature produced by this organisation as indicative of broader forms of the ways in which Kalahandi has been framed.

In the literature produced by the NGO (some of it consists of pre-published material), the actions of the postcolonial state are seen to have resulted in the problems of destitution and starvation in the undivided Kalahandi district. This literature argues that till the integration of the princely state of Kalahandi in the state of Odisha in independent India in 1948, the area did not experience any agricultural droughts due to robust local natural resource management systems. Apparently more than 40 per cent of the cultivated lands of the district were irrigated by traditional water harvesting structures that were promoted by the kings of the princely state. The postindependence nationalisation of these structures and their consequent decline due to governmental neglect is seen as an important reason behind the present destitution. Over-exploitation of forests of the region for timber and bamboo by the forest department of the postcolonial state is blamed for producing the same effects (Mohapatra and Panda 2001; Pradhan 2001).

[32] SVA is an organisation headquartered in Bhubaneswar and has regional offices in four districts in Western Odisha: Bilenjore in Nuapada district, Padampur in Bargarh district, Paramanandpur near Bhawanipatna in Kalahandi district and Patnagarh in Bolangir district. It also has many field offices in these districts. The organisation has run a campaign for village self-government called Gram Swarajya Abhiyan, and has been advocating for natural resource management practices sensitive to local conditions. The most important functionary of the NGO, Jagdish Pradhan, is originally from Kalahandi, but now divides his time primarily between Kalahandi and Bhubaneswar. The organisation irregularly publishes a journal called *Gaunli Bichara* (literally 'village thoughts'), a monthly newsletter called *Gram Swarajya Abhiyan*, and many handbooks, short pamphlets, leaflets, relevant translations and monographs.

At the same time, the literature produced by the NGO try and 'rectify' the image of Kalahandi produced by media that choose to focus on only the sensational, sometimes concocted, reports of child sale and starvation deaths (Gaunli Bichara 2003b). This literature foregrounds the agricultural productivity and diversity of the district, the quality of the produce of the district, and the fact that purely in terms of quantity of production of staples such as rice Kalahandi is a surplus district (Pradhan 2007a, 2002). Land availability and equity in land distribution are not seen as reasons behind the perceived destitution in Kalahandi as the per capita availability of land in Kalahandi is argued to be greater and the proportion of the landless labourers lesser than the relatively richer districts of Odisha (Pradhan 2001). Promotion of local, traditional varieties of food crops, restoration of traditional resource management structures and institutions and promotion of local initiatives are seen as key to the promoting of sustainable livelihoods, combating droughts and decreasing destitution (*Gaunli Bichara* 2003a; Majhi, Binapani 2007; Pradhan 2003, 2007b).

This literature produced by the NGO argues that it is the intrusion of the state that has produced the present state of destitution in Kalahandi and southwestern Odisha. State failure in the field of welfare of the people of this region is seen as twofold: as a matter of lack of 'policy imagination', of being wedded to the 'big is beautiful' conceptualisation of development, and as faulty implementation of policies and programmes that can go some way in reducing destitution. Thus, this NGO sees the problems of the undivided Kalahandi district through the lens of failure of public action and of state failure.

Governmental literature on Kalahandi: the case of *Kalā jharan*

Kalahandi has engendered the production of voluminous literature by various governmental actors and bodies. These include reports by various enquiry commissions into drought and deprivation in Kalahandi, debates on Kalahandi in the Odisha state legislative assembly and the Indian parliament and the various plan documents of both the national and state governments. Most of this literature sees the Kalahandi district, the greater Kalahandi region and South-West Odisha through the same lens which national

and international academic literature and media uses to frame Kalahandi (Jayal 1999; Currie 2000; Banik 2008).

Perhaps as an antidote to all this negative publicity and as a 'brand-management' exercise, the district administration of Kalahandi started an annual cultural festival held every January in the district headquarters of Bhawanipatna. This festival is organised by the Kalahandi district administration in collaboration with the district council of culture. This festival was initially called Kalahandi Utsav and was later renamed as Ghumura [33] and it saw its fifteenth edition in 2011. Every year a souvenir called *Kalā jharan* is released to mark the festival. The title of the souvenir literally means a rivulet of the arts—in the local dialect *kalā* means the arts and *jharan* means a rivulet. Ghumura has become an important event, arguably the most important event, in the cultural and social calendar of the district. *Kalā jharan* is also an important publication in the district now by the sheer virtue of the regularity of its publication. The success of the annual festival can be gauged by the many other district-level festivals started in other districts of South-West Odisha subsequently.

During doctoral fieldwork issues for the years 1998, 1999, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2008 could be collected. In these six years, 84 out of 115 articles published (nearly 73 per cent) were on various topics related to the cultural, historical, archeological and social heritage of Kalahandi. There were a few essays in the souvenirs that directly dealt with various social problems in Kalahandi including destitution. But they were written in a style that was defensive, and tried to show that despite having many problems the district is culturally vibrant and has made some progress.

Thus, this analysis of the souvenirs shows that there has been an attempt by the district administration, an important level of the local state, to displace the conventional image of the district by fostering an alternative cultural production in the form of this annual festival and in promoting certain representations of the district as being culturally rich, if materially poor.

[33] A traditional folk instrument of Kalahandi

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Kalahandi emerges around the year 1985 as a marginal area plagued by drought and starvation, a site *par excellence* for the workings of the emergent mission mode of state-fabrication. It has also given schematic accounts of various kinds of narratives that have framed such an emergence; some of these emerge from the media, others from within the academy, whereas others come from civil society organisations. But all these narratives play the role of framing of Kalahandi as a land of droughts, hunger and starvation deaths, as a place where government has failed. Otherwise like the articles published in *Kalā jharan* they try to shift the discussion to the realm of culture by portraying the district as materially poor but as being rich culturally. It is not that there are no differences within these different kinds of stories. Akhil Nayak and Bharat Majhi address concerns of class and religion in their poetry whereas Basudev Sunani deals more with issues surrounding caste. The autobiographies that were discussed get a varied set of concerns to the table, and follow very different narrative strategies; for example Behera uses a third person account whereas the others follow a more straightforward first person one. But, despite these differences, these narratives end up constructing *one* Kalahandi, a Kalahandi that is backward in developmental terms, a region where traditional governmental action has failed, and therefore in need of new kinds of responses by the government.

It is in this context that watershed development and the district watershed development mission as objects of study have been selected to understand the operations of this emergent mode of state-fabrication that attempt at rectifying the problems associated with earlier kinds of governmental action. The next three chapters identify some important aspects of these emergent forms of governmental action. Chapter IV provides a map of the tactics deployed in their mission mode of state-fabrication as evidenced in the workings of DWM, Kalahandi through the work of one project – WORLP - and the manipulations of these tactics by lower-level project staff and targeted project beneficiaries by their own set of tactics. Chapter V shows the emergence of 'the social' as a site of governmental intervention, and identifies convergence in the everyday

practices of governmental and non-governmental organisations as two key effects of the morphing of the state of the ground. Chapter VI argues that vernacular formulations surrounding the working of the regional state capture emergent processes of state-fabrication in a better fashion rather than theoretically overdetermined formulations such as political society.

Chapter IV

"The government has become the biggest NGO these days"[34]: tactics of state-fabrication in the mission mode

I. Introduction

It is 2.30 in the afternoon of the month of *jyestha*[35], and I am sitting in a tiny stand-alone room with naked, non-plastered brick walls in the village of Mahulpani in Kalahandi that houses the office of the Sānjore Microwatershed Development Committee, a village-level institution set up under WORLP. There is a crowd of women belonging to self-help groups sitting just outside the door of the room. Inside the room a couple of middle-level project staff are trying to prepare business development plans (BDPs) for dozens of largely illiterate project beneficiaries who have already taken grants and bought goats for farming. The Kondh secretary of the committee rushes into the room and tells me, 'Āsun, bhāuja jugichhe' (Please come since your sister-in law is waiting). This is a call for having lunch at his place. But he pointedly ignores the project staff who must also be hungry, and who have no other way of getting lunch in the village so late in the afternoon, and had indicated to the secretary in my presence the previous day that they would want him to make arrangements for lunch. I feel a little awkward, but feel that flight is the better part of valour, and leave the room for lunch.

This incident from doctoral fieldwork raises a set of important questions. Why did the BDPs need to be created after the distribution of grants when they should have been made long before the event? How is it that most of the grantees have been able to buy goats when goats are officially seen as 'the bane' of watershed development projects in India? How is it that a lower-level project functionary is able to defy his seniors by withdrawing even the basic courtesies of village society, such as offering food, that too in public? To ask in summary, how has the workings of government and the process of

[34] Quoted in Nagar and Raju 2003: page 3.
[35] Jyestha is a month according to the lunar calendar. It is one of the hottest months of the year in most parts of Odisha just before the onset of the monsoons; spread over May-June.

state-fabrication changed by the mushrooming of ‘missions’ in India over the last 25 years?

The dominant narratives surrounding the state in India can only partially and inadequately engage with these sets of questions, and there is a need to reopen this debate in a foundational sense. As already discussed in Chapters I and II, elaborations of the passive revolution formulation and its political society extension have informed discussions surrounding the recent changes in state-fabrication in India. Following the policies of liberalisation of the economy adopted under Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao in the period 1991–96, the changes in the realm of the political have been framed as that of changing relationships between state, market and society (Menon and Nigam 2008). This reading can be read as a part of a wider international literature in which the state is seen as increasingly withdrawing from various kinds of production and provisioning (Gordon and Whitty 1997; Yun 1999; Jilberto and Mommen 2002). The space ceded by the state has been seen as being occupied by market entities such as corporations and non-market entities such as NGOs (Baijal 2002; Kamat 2004; Mukherji 2004; Dolhinow 2005; Tooley and Dixon 2006). This literature on the state and the political in India can be located within the larger international critique of the neoliberal trend in public policy since the 1980s (Radice 2008). Apart from state withdrawal, this international critique has also involved interrogating the adoption of corporate mechanisms of governance etc being adopted by governmental organisations, and a broader trend of corporatisation of earlier services provided by the state (Joseph 2007). An important example of the latter in India can be seen in the corporatisation of the various state electricity boards, starting with the electricity board in the state of Odisha (Dubash and Rajan 2001).

II. Mission mode of statecraft and five tactics of state-fabrication

Two themes are, relatively speaking, underdiscussed in the debates surrounding the recent changes in governmental action and organisation. The first concern is about the formal aspects of state-fabrication. The second concern deals with the ways in which

these changing processes are perceived by people, and the ways in which people act upon and shape these changing governmental imperatives. To recapitulate the arguments made in Chapter II, beginning with sometime in the 1980s, the state in India started operating in the mission mode. This was associated with a shift from symbolic to quotidian logistics of state-fabrication, and with respect to regimes related to the perceptions of the state by communities this shift can be seen in terms of the growth of regime of tactility. This chapter details the rules of operations and modes of availability through which the state appears in specific local contexts of the emergent quotidian logistics of state-fabrication.

In the locality and the context that this thesis deals with, that is, watershed development through WORLP in Kalahandi, the changes brought about by the mission mode of state-fabrication can be understood through five principal tactics of operation. The first one is that of **multiplication** of nodes of contact with society, the second is the **expansion** of the body of the state by incorporation of other types of agencies such as NGOs, the third is **pluralisation** of logics framing governmental action, and the fourth is that of **provisionalisation** of governmental practices, and the fifth is the **textualisation and visibilisation** of governmental processes. This is not to say these are the only five tactics that are available, or that these five are always dominant, but that in this specific context these five seem to give shape to governmental practices and perceptions of the state.

The material offered in the following sub-sections in this chapter tries to side-step the debates surrounding state-formation by offering a formal description of tactics involved in the mission-mode of state-fabrication. Each of the following sub-section of this chapter details out one such governmental tactic. Some of these sub-sections also show that such tactics are not uniformly successful in achieving the stated goals. At each stage these are contested and sometimes subverted by people belonging to various social groups by their own sets of tactical actions. Therefore, these governmental tactics, even when successful, can be seen only as contingent achievements. In seeing governmental tactics as a significant aspect of the mission mode of state-fabrication this thesis broadly

borrows from the use of these terms by de Certeau (1988). He uses tactic as an aspect of acting in time that lies beyond 'the proper' which is the location of strategy and strategic intentionalities. By reading governmental action as a species of tactic and not strategy this thesis tries to move beyond the readings of governmental actions as being suffused with strategic intentionalities that originate in certain bounded spaces. The operation of these tactics combine to produce a web-like weaving of the state, and feed into the quotidian logistics of state-fabrication. By doing so this thesis is able to provide a formal description of processes related to the state.

Multiplication

Multiplication of nodes of contact between state and society

By self-definition a node (in the context of this thesis) is a point of contact between state and society. With the growth of the missions in various sectors (including those dealing with watershed) there has been a mushrooming of such nodes at various levels. For example, missions are not only formed at the levels of the central and state governments but also at the district level.

At the levels of the state, district and blocks, OWDM, DWM, Kalahandi and the PIAs have been created as parallel structures to the already extant soil conservation department. The most interesting innovations have happened at the village level. Depending upon the arable area, one or more villages have been combined to form Committees. Each Committee has around 500 hectares under its command. Each committee is a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, and has a president, secretary and around 10–12 committee members. Each Committee has an office and four CLWs. Thus, there has been a growth in the number of institutions at various levels at which governmental institutions used to exist earlier as well as a growth of new institutions at lower levels. These institutions act as the nodes of interface between state and society.

An aspect of the multiplication of the nodes of interaction between state and society is the dramatically increased number of direct beneficiaries. The livelihood promotion budget of WORLP, comprising of the revolving fund for the SHGs and the livelihood grants for individual households, is more than a quarter of the total budgeted amount of the project. The minimum amount that can be distributed as livelihood grants is Rs 4000, although sometimes committees distributed Rs 3000 per grant to maximise the coverage of beneficiaries. On an average, around 150 households belonging to the poor and very poor categories have got livelihood grants in the microwatersheds (MWSs) of the PIAs under study. The number of households covered under the revolving fund component is at least 100 in most MWSs. Even allowing for some overlap of households that have benefited from both RF and livelihood grants, this is a larger number considering the fact that most MWSs have around 400–500 households.

Such penetration of the government through newer organisational forms and processes has sometimes been framed within narratives of extension of state power (Ferguson 1996) or its obverse—state withdrawal and erosion (Gordon and Whitty 1997; Yun 1999; Wegren 2000). In contrast to this, the material presented in this section details the processes involved in the multiplication of the nodes at which the state comes into contact with society. One of the ways in which this multiplication happens is by a process of penetration by dispersion of new kinds of institutions. The multiplication of nodes of contact between state and society has not necessarily translated into greater effectiveness in governmental practice. But it has involved the state seeping into the social and getting imbricated into multiple networks of actors and agents and their tactical usages. What follows is a case that illustrates such a process.

Imperfect translation of governmental imperatives: case of toilets

During the course of fieldwork, one of the major initiatives of the PD, DWM, Kalahandi concerned the construction of toilets for watershed committee members. In the monsoons of 2009 many lives were lost due to dysentery, diarrhea and other related gastro-intestinal diseases in the district. One of the two blocks where intensive fieldwork was undertaken

was affected with several people dying. The official in charge for the district (called 'point person' for the district in bureaucratic jargon) in the state secretariat, a senior IAS officer, came on a visit to Kalahandi immediately, and after field visits and reviews of the works of the various departments in the district headquarters of Bhawanipatna gave a slew of recommendations. One of the more concrete targets that he gave was to cover all the villages with toilets to prevent further deaths from diarrhea in the next monsoons. Since the watershed mission is seen as having a good outreach in the rural areas, to around a quarter of the villages of the district, and has significant amounts of funds at its disposal, the district administration gave the responsibility of building new toilets to the District Watershed Mission, and it was asked to coordinate its activities with that of the Rural Water and Sanitation Services (RWSS) department in the district.

From this point onwards toilet building became a major thematic focus of the work of the Committees. Thus, despite all the narratives of participatory decentralisation that one heard from higher level officials, the reality was that if the PD or other senior officers wanted to push something onto the agenda of the village-level committees they could do this with ease. But this pushing down was not a one-sided process, and such imperatives were appropriated and 'used' at each level to further the agenda of various social actors for a variety of reasons.

The PD was generally seen as an efficient and capable man who was not corrupt. But his clean image and his propensity of giving 'impossible' targets to staff was interpreted variously by different social actors. For example, many of his colleagues saw it as a deliberate building of an image to be able to get a plump posting in a bilateral/multilateral organisation later on. It was also another way for the beleaguered PD to spend some money; the collector had reportedly expressed his displeasure to the PD for not being able to spend the money allotted to him by OWDM. The PD in his part promised all the PIAs that the cost of the toilets would be picked up by the PD's office itself although there was much confusion later regarding this. After the toilet initiative was started, for the first couple of months, every time the PD would attend a meeting he would bring up the issue of the toilets as one of the first things on the agenda even though

it was not there in the agenda prepared for the meeting. It was very clear in the way the PD pushed the initiative that this was something very close to his heart.

Initially the toilet initiative was pushed quite heavily by the PIAs-in-charge concerned including Mr. Patra, the head of the NGO PIA, as he wanted to score 'development points' in the mission by being one of the first movers in constructing toilets. There was the added reason as he was assured of prompt response from the RWSS as the engineer concerned in the block was a friend of one of his staff members.

The secretaries of the Committees saw it as one way of getting contracts for 12–14 toilets in their village that they could easily supervise and get a little money on the side. All the committee members saw it as getting one more benefit from the watershed project. For those committee members who had not got any benefits till date, it was seen as one way of salvaging something out of a fire or as one committee member put to me graphically, 'ghar podinu jen tā bi milile sār'—whatever one salvages out of a house on fire is good.

But there was a minor problem involved; this was a problem not only for Mr. Patra, but for all PIAs across the district. It was a small matter of shortage of bricks. Because of the late rains that year (2009), sowing and other agricultural processes got delayed by four to five weeks across the district. This meant that most of the bricks that were constructed in the summer of that year, and had not been carted off for usage or sale, were now surrounded by growing or maturing crops of paddy and carting them away in these conditions was impossible. If each village was constructing, say, 150–200 toilets, then getting bricks from large suppliers inside or outside the district would have been a feasible solution. But one was looking at only 10–15 toilets per village. The PIAs or the PD office could not take the responsibility of supplying the bricks because the project structure (due to 'decentralisation') did not allow the ways in which such a route of sourcing bricks could be legitimately accounted for. Thus, despite the continuous exhortations of the project director, till the end of the monsoons there was no movement regarding the construction of toilets. The only village in which toilets were constructed

during this period of time was in the village of Baxi by a state-level NGO through another governmental initiative; this was possible because they built toilets for the whole village, and Baxi is a small village.

Thus, the same formal structures that made for the deployment of a tactic of multiplication of nodes at the various levels of government also made translations of certain governmental imperatives difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, extension of the state does not necessarily involve the expansion of its power.

Expansion of the body of the state

Apart from multiplication of the nodes through which interactions between state and society, the mission mode of state-fabrication has also involved an increase in the number and types of institutions that fall under the ambit of the state. Watershed development in the mission mode has involved the incorporation of what were earlier seen as non-state actors and institutions into the body of the state. These have been generally studied as Government Organised NGOs or GONGOs that are formed by states to get access to funds and expertise that are relatively inaccessible to governmental agencies and to venture out into unconventional areas of work (Chen 2006). These are generally more prominent in relatively undemocratic countries (Mulligan 2007).

But of late, these have started rapidly growing in number in democratic countries such as India as well. The growth of NGOs in India has been seen as a part of a broader shift towards neoliberal governmentality (Sharma 2006, 2008; Gupta and Sharma 2006). This thesis tries to take the discussion surrounding GONGOs forward by detailing processes through which NGOs are increasingly used as an organisational form for the expansion of the state. The following discussion gives an account of this by using the DWM, Kalahandi as an example, and shows the ways in which such a process of expansion opens up possibilities for tactical action by subaltern social groups.

"The government has become the biggest NGO these days": expansion of the body of the state through NGOs

In the context of DWM, Kalahandi and WORLP, the expansion of the body of the state has happened through two principal ways. One way has been the 'outsourcing' of government's work to NGOs and other institutions. In the case of the WORLP in Kalahandi, three of the six PIAs are NGOs. Apart from the actual implementation of the project, some of the other ancillary work, such as that of training of lower-level project staff, has been outsourced to NGOs and academic institutions. Apart from outsourcing, projectisation in the mission has involved using the organisational form of the NGOs by the state to extend itself on the ground. For example, although village-level committees are all registered as societies under the Societies Registration Act of 1860, and are technically NGOs, they have been initiated as part of a project (WORLP in this instance). For all practical purposes they are a part of the state. But this is not merely a matter of extension of the state into lower levels. As already discussed in Chapter II, even at the level of the state government, the project holder of WORLP, OWDM, is also a society. This means that the state is morphing by creating NGOs, and funneling a large part of its activities through them. Thus, the very understanding of what constitutes a 'governmental' organisation is changing and expanding. This expansion is as much in the real world as it is conceptual. In a sector like watershed development this 'institutional expansion' has also meant that the actual potential and possibilities of interacting with the state have also increased substantially.

This shows that there has not only been an expansion of the type and number of institutions and the conceptual space of governmental institutions, but also the potential for the actual incidents and spaces in which people come into contact with and perceive the state. Sometimes the expansion of the body of the state to reach into village society by incorporating novel institutional forms such as microwatershed development committees is framed within narratives of elite capture (Baviskar 2004; Chhotray 2004, 2007). The case presented in the following sub-section, that of the tanks and the Committee in the village of Mahulpani, illustrates that sometimes even subaltern groups

not only respond to governmental initiatives and bureaucratic fiats of decentralisation and participation, but are also able to creatively use the spaces created by the project to chart out innovative courses of action.

The case of the tanks and committee of Mahulpani

Mahulpani is a village in the project area of an NGO PIA, and the work of WORLP is managed by a Committee that comprises of this single village. The village of Mahulpani has six numerically important jāti groups; these are Kondh (technically classified as a Scheduled Tribe), Dom (a Scheduled Caste group), Kulthā, Teli, Gaud and Sundhi. The last four jāti groups are classified as Other Backward Classes (OBC), and amongst these four jāti groups the Gaud are the poorest and the most marginalised, not merely in this village but generally in the district of Kalahandi as well. The village does not have a single household belonging to the general category. Over the last three generations a significant amount of land alienation has taken place from the Kondhs, Gauds and the Doms to the three other OBC jāti groups, but the trend seems to have stemmed over the last 30 years or so. As far as popular memory goes, most of this alienation took place in the decades immediately preceding and succeeding independence. Although some Kondh families still retain a big part of their landholdings, many have become marginal farmers or agricultural labourers, and severely resent this process of alienation.

Both the president and secretary of the Committee are Kondhs[36]. From the very beginning of the watershed project, the OBC farmers have pushed for investments in existing and new water harvesting structures such as tanks. It should be mentioned here that, relatively speaking, the project documents themselves focus more on tanks/water harvesting structures as compared to wells. But only one new tank was constructed by the Committee in Mahulpani, the principal beneficiary of which was a Kondh farmer, although some OBC farmers also benefited. No investments were also made in de-silting existing tanks.

[36] For data on the profile of secretaries and presidents of the ten committees of the NGO PIA under study, please refer to Appendix 4.

The Kondhs in Mahulpani are divided into two rival groups, with the president of the Committee belonging to one group and the secretary belonging to the other. But it was widely known that both these groups got together to oppose plans of building tanks through the watershed project that would end up disproportionately benefiting the richer, landed households belonging to Kulthās, Sundhis and Telis. The secretary and the agricultural CLW, both of whom were Kondhs, repeatedly said during fieldwork, "teliā mune tel dhāli kari kān lābh?" (why should one pour more oil on someone whose head/scalp is already oily?).

Despite repeated resolutions in Committee meetings, by the time of completion of fieldwork towards the end of February 2010, work had not started in any of the tanks in the village, and the Kondhs had been successful in stalling the work from starting. First, although most jātis in the village have households that use wage-labour as a livelihood strategy, the largest proportion of labourers are Kondhs and Doms; and work on tanks is labour intensive. Thus, the secretaries and presidents always found it easy to convince their extended kin members to not come to work on the tank sites. Second, there was a general prejudice at the highest levels of the project administration against undertaking big projects of earthwork as such investments were seen as potential sites of corruption. Thus, digging more wells also found favour with higher officials as compared to constructing/de-silting tanks. Third, the digging of wells found more favour amongst Committee members compared to work on tanks, since the benefits from the latter are widely and thinly distributed. On the other hand, by distributing wells, allies can be built as it is seen by the beneficiary as a favour that she received from a Committee member individually.

The combination of all these factors allowed the Kondh president and the secretary of the Committee to prevent the resources of the project being spent on tanks that might end up further marginalising their community in the village. As this sub-section has illustrated, the expansion of the state through the incorporation of organisational forms such as NGOs at the village-level for delivering projects does not

necessarily lead to processes of elite-capture. The expansion of the state also lends itself to manipulations of marginal communities such as the tribal Kondhs, who occasionally use these very structures to further their own ends. This cannot be merely read off as local politics. It has to be seen within the broader context of emerging tactics of state-fabrication.

Pluralisation of logics of state-fabrication

Attendant upon these processes of multiplication and expansion of the body of the state has been pluralisation of the logics that are associated with governmental operations. The state that now seems to not only multiply and expand, also seems to lend itself to a plurality of modalities and logics of various social agents. The postcolonial national state purportedly drew its legitimacy from two separate yet related modes of operation. The first was through the practice of electoral democracy in which the state claimed to represent the nation through the logic of representation. The second was the use of the language of development to both create and operate the domain of scientific planning to act upon society (Kaviraj 2010a, 2010c) at a distance through symbolic logistics of state-fabrication.

Governmental logics of participation and targeting

Participation has been seen as a part of a broader trend towards governance reforms and decentralisation across nations since the 1980s (Crook and Manor 1998). During the same period, in many fields of natural resource management, participation of communities increasingly became popular as a policy prescription in India as well as other regions of the world such as Africa (Kolavalli and Kerr 2002; Nelson and Agrawal 2008). Often such participation of the community in natural resource management is envisaged to be enabled by single-purpose user committees. These user committees are seen to be depoliticising entities that purportedly subvert the functioning of multipurpose local government (Baviskar 2004; Manor 2004). Thus, the logic of participation in single-

purpose committees and the logic of representation in multipurpose local government in authority are often seen to be at loggerheads with each other.

With the increasing importance of the mission mode of state-fabrication there seems to be an increasing conflation between these two logics. For example, the village-level watershed committees of WORLP, which are apparently tools for enabling participation, are created with the logic of representation; adequate representation is attempted to be ensured to various groups such as women, the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In the 20 watershed development committees in the two PIAs that were studied for doctoral fieldwork, all the committees had representation of various social categories such as scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women depending upon their presence in the village.

With 'elite capture' increasingly framing narratives surrounding such morphings of the state (Platteau 2004; Iversen et al 2006; Dasgupta and Beard 2007), targeting is another logic that seems to be associated with modes of operation of state power. The logic of targeting partitions communities into distinct groups based on governmental categories and then makes certain interventions contingent upon the membership of these groups (Ahluwalia 1993; Bigman and Srinivasan 2002). To give an example, households in the project villages in WORLP are divided into four groups: 'well-off', 'manageable', 'poor' and 'very poor', and specific programmatic interventions are then targeted at each of these groups.

The cultural logic of bhāg[37]

Generally the watershed-plus approach on which WORLP is based is supposed to take into account the inequities attendant with the traditional watershed approach based on land. As detailed earlier, it is the tactical and creative appropriation of local actors and the contingent nature of project interventions that helps take preliminary steps towards equity, and not merely the specific design or the official intervention strategy of the

[37] Bhāg is an Odia word that means reasonable and rightful share.

project per se. Multiplication of the nodes of contact between state and society and expansion of the body of the state makes for the multiplication of certain governmental logics such as participation and targeting. It also makes for the infiltration of certain vernacular cultural logics into the domain governmental action. In doing so, this sub-section follows the lead of Li (2005) who argues that contextualised local knowledge, practices and logics often lead to outcomes that cannot be totally explained through the tactics of state-fabrication. Bhāg can be seen as one such logic.

This section tries to answer the question that arises out of the discussions of the previous sub-section - if some, no matter how marginal, appropriation and usage of project structures by non-elite groups is observed, how is this phenomenon possible at all, and how do we understand such a finding. Widely shared cultural notions of bhāg (rightful share) can be seen as a register of conduct providing an ethical space for locating such anti-disciplinary tactics. The decentralisation of watershed development through Committees and the concomitant watershed-plus approach is premised upon the idea of appropriate targeting of the poor and reaching out to marginalised communities. The argument is that the government finds it difficult to reach out to target communities and that decentralisation helps to do this efficiently. But the governing logic of the Committees is not that of appropriate or proper targeting—it is, as articulated by Committee members and secretaries, one of bhāg. The way benefits accruing from the watershed project were distributed across various sections was premised upon the logic of bhāg.

In a meeting of the Committee of one of the villages in the project area of the NGO PIA once the subject of distribution of the NRM funds came up. At the beginning of the discussion one of the women members of the Committee, Sarala, said that as per the project rules (*prajekt niyam*) anyone who wanted to construct a well in his backyard and not in the farm lands should not be allotted a well. This was a rhetorical point as the president of the Committee himself had got a well allotted to him, and had constructed the well in his back yard. Sarala belonged to a faction of the village opposed to the president. Since wells are supposed to be constructed for the purpose of cultivation and

not for sourcing drinking water in the project, the member had a point. But no one picked up the issue and let it pass. The Committee realised that it had money for constructing only eight wells. Since the village had four major hamlets, it decided that each hamlet should get two wells each. A woman Committee member, Sati, contested this by pointing out that earlier her hamlet was given one well less than their share, and this time they should be allotted one well more. She expressed this demand in the idiom of getting the rightful bhāg for her hamlet—she said, 'Mui mor padār bhāg magunchhe, bhik magunchhe ki!' ('I am asking for the rightful share for my hamlet, not for alms!'). Others pacified her saying that whatever has happened has happened, and one cannot keep on harping back to the past; she was promised that her hamlet would be compensated in some other way. This settled the matter for the time being.

After this division between the hamlets was agreed upon, then a list was made of names of those who had applied for wells, and beneficiaries were chosen based on the explicit reason of their competence as cultivators, the additional reason (implicit) of their closeness to the Committee members, and due to other sundry reasons. One of the criteria that governed the distribution of benefits at the sub-hamlet, inter-household level was the prior receipt of benefits of the project by the extended households. If one of the brothers (who had divided family property amongst themselves and now headed nuclear households of their own) had got some major benefit, then generally his brothers were not allowed any major benefits. Even at this level of 'sharing' what governed the distribution of project benefits was a notion of bhāg at the inter-household level. It can be argued that in fact this is merely another example of elite capture. The logic of bhāg is in fact amenable to elite capture at the higher levels of the project, and one alternative meaning of bhāg is in fact the sharing of spoils. But in the villages, partly due to the very wide spread of benefits of the project, the dominant aspect of the logic of bhāg that governed their distribution was the vernacular notions of sharing.

Thus, participation and targeting are increasingly important logics that are imbricated in processes of state-fabrication. As this section has shown, representation and participation are not necessarily at loggerheads with each other with respect to

practices on the ground. The increasing importance of participation in fabricating the state has not meant the fading away of the logic of representation; there is a certain hybridisation of these logics in practice. An important effect of the increased salience of participation has meant that the space for the articulation of vernacular logics such as bhāg is made possible.

Provisionalisation

Along with multiplication, expansion and pluralisation, provisionalisation is another important tactic of state-fabrication in the mission mode. The idea of the state is generally sustained by a certain imperative to portray itself as a permanent entity that lies above society (Migdal 2001). The state is seen as an agent of change, but not necessarily as a temporal artifact. Narratives surrounding the state in the postcolony have increasingly been told through the tropes of state failure or state withdrawal (Strange 1998; Scott 1999; Saha and Mallavarapu 2006; Bates 2008). What this sub-section argues is that due to the multiplication and expansion of the body of the state and the pluralisation of its governing logics there has been a certain provisionalisation of the state as a material fact, although this may still not bring into question the abstract notion of the state as a permanent entity.

In most small towns and cities in India, the state is made visible and available locally to people by its material body, primarily offices. In most small cities and towns government offices of various kinds ranging from the post office to the police barracks provided the landmarks around which people lay out a map of their everyday lives and experiences (Gupta 1995).

But in WORLP, only the office of the Project Director was a semi-permanent one, since it had been rented out from another governmental body. The offices of the block-level project implementing agencies were operated in rented houses and these were frequently shifted. Although WORLP is a government project and its project holder, OWDM, is a permanent body (a registered society), there was a thorough casualisation of

work practices due to the projectisation of the watershed development work. This meant that low-level functionaries had been on periodic contracts, and some of them had been serving in various watershed development projects for nearly 10 years. Due to these and other reasons it can be argued that provisionalisation is one of the tactics of the mission mode of state-fabrication. In terms of the broader shift that frames the narrative of this thesis, the shift from the symbolic logistics of state-fabrication to the quotidian one, such provisionalisation of the state is important. Whereas state presence was premised upon its visibility earlier, it is no longer exclusively so. As the state reaches into the interstices of village society, it is more 'felt' rather than 'seen'; the provisionalisation of the state aids in such a process.

Textualisation

Textualisation is another tactic through which the state is fabricated in the mission mode. This is linked to the imperative towards provisionalisation—one of the important ways in which the state persists and is made available as a coherent entity persisting over time is through textualisation and by making such textualisation visible. For example, the project experience of WORLP has been extensively documented through working papers (more than 60), newsletters and handbooks, and monthly progress reports.

In the Indian context, this process of textualisation has already been noted and documented by some scholars studying Indian society. Readings of the textualising tactics of the state in India have been deployed to understand the complicity of citizens and lower-level bureaucrats in the self-sterilisation drive during the 1975–77 emergency by looking at files dealing with land-allotments for the self-sterilised (Tarlo 2001), the failures of mythologies of statehood in the context of anti-Muslim violence in Bombay by looking at the work of the Sri Krishna Commission and its report (Hansen 2001b), and in understanding the state as a form of regulation oscillating between the rational and the magical modes of being (Das 2007: 162-183).

Reporting success stories

The following discussion locates itself in the strand of scholarship as exemplified in the work of the above-mentioned scholars in seeing documents as an important part of the processes of state-fabrication. But instead documenting and detailing the contents of reports, newsletters and other texts produced by the project, this section tries to map out the processes involved in such imperatives of textualisation. A large part of such an imperative is not only about documenting activities of the state but is also about tropes of governance such as transparency that are premised upon making social processes legible. From the district office (especially from the PD) there was a constant demand for documentation and reports. One of the routines of textualisation involved documenting what were known as success stories. These success stories often involved recounting in a short narrative form (in a before and after format with photographic documentation) the positive changes brought about in a 'poor' or 'very poor' households (according to the categorisation of WORLP) with respect to livelihoods.

One of the key informants Mr. Rahul Patnaik was in charge of documentation of WORLP, and one of the tasks he had taken on himself was to produce DWM, Kalahandi's newsletter. One of the key items carried in these newsletters is success stories. This newsletter had been very sporadic in nature, not being published for many months at one go, and copies of many of the early issues were very hard to come by. It was only after Mr. Patnaik joined the project that its production started again. There was an imperative to produce success stories. The textualisation of 'success' was an important part of the project. In every review meeting the PD would always ask for success stories to be submitted. In fact according to him, each village should be able to yield at least 50–100 success stories at any given instant. But when it comes to actually archiving these success stories, there seems to be a great institutional inertia to do so.

One of the functions of the imperative to collect these success stories is to *narrativise* (even if in a rudimentary way) what the staff have to submit in the form of numbers in a routine fashion. Numbers can also be invented; but each success story has to

be (by the narrative logic) accompanied by a photograph of the beneficiary as well as of the benefit(s), for example, a herd of goats or a small shop. This means that it forces the collector of these stories to visit the field site more often than would have otherwise happened. An important result of this imperative for collecting success stories is that it helps in normatively 'defining' what is and what is not 'success'. Thus, the collection and circulation of these stories makes the messiness of project practices available for regulation.

Apart from success stories, another text created through the project was wall paintings with a deep yellow background listing out the various expenditures incurred by the project through the Committees. The secretaries were regularly exhorted by senior project staff to update these paintings so as to be able to maintain what was termed as transparency. In the three PIA offices visited for doctoral work, not one had these wall paintings. This desire to visibilise happened primarily at the lowest level of the organisational pyramid, the site at and through which decentralisation is supposed to take place. But such demands are not always met with acquiescence. One of the ways in which this imperative for textualisation and visibilisation is challenged is, through what the locals term as, *lukibā*—literally, hiding or making oneself invisible.

Lukibā as everyday tactic

A large part of the regular textualisation of project processes happened because of the need to satisfy the demands made by auditors (both external and internal) on a regular basis. When the external auditors came for their regular auditing, they did not check the records of each and every Committee. The PIA suggested a few committees and then the auditors chose amongst these. These Committees were invariably the better performing ones, both in terms of work and in terms of maintenance of records. These Committees and their secretaries then had to do additional work in terms of being present when the auditors visited. They also had to be open to scrutiny at a level that other committees were not expected to, and to go through drills till the actual audit happened. The

secretaries and presidents tried to deal with these demands with a ruse as old as history—lukibā.

The first time the researcher came to know of this practice was also one of its most creative usages encountered in the field. It was into the first few months of doctoral fieldwork. That day a team of internal auditors was to come to the PIA office to check for discrepancies in the records of the various Committees. Four Committees were identified as successful whose records could be presented before the internal auditors for perusal. All the four secretaries were informed over the phone, so were the presidents of the Committees. But soon enough, by the evening of the day before the day of the audit, the PIA started becoming a little nervous about the actual arrival of the functionaries, and asked Jasobanta Pradhan, a WDT member, to go and get the secretaries from two of the four Committees. On the day of the audit, Jasobanta dutifully finished his breakfast around nine o'clock and left for the villages on his motorcycle. We went on waiting for both the visiting auditing team and the secretaries. Both seemed elusive. After sometime the auditing team called up the office and told that they would turn up only after lunch. That seemed to give some elbow room to the PIA staff.

Meanwhile, Jasobanta was not reachable on his phone. By around quarter past eleven he returned on his motorcycle. The story he had to tell about one of the secretaries was a hilarious one. He could not find Mrutyunjaya, the secretary of the Committee in Mākhankhunti village, at home. While coming back, he had a fit of inspiration and went to a village close by that happened to be the village of Mrutyunjaya's in-laws, where the latter was found sleeping. On being found there, he was sheepish and agreed to follow Jasobanta after a bath. He followed Jasobanta on his own motorcycle, but at a key turning on the way he took the 'wrong' turn and disappeared yet again—thus, lukibā was fashioned into an art form. This then in some sense subverts the textualising logic of the project that is explicitly premised upon introducing 'transparency' into project processes and practices.

Conclusion

The preceding sections of this chapter have extended the argument made in Chapter II that over the last two and half decades there has been the growth of the mission mode of state-fabrication in India that has involved the growth of various missions in a large number of sectors of governmental activity such as health, education, livelihoods and natural resource management. This chapter has provided a formal account of the process by giving details of the tactics through which the state has been morphing. The deployment of these tactics is simultaneously contingent upon changes in the body of the state and the ways in which it interacts with society.

In the context of the work of the District Watershed Mission, Kalahandi, and of WORLP the growth of the mission mode of state-fabrication has involved the deployment of five principal tactics through which the state has morphed: multiplication, expansion, pluralisation, provisionalisation and textualisation. But the deployment of these tactics, by allowing for the transformations of the body of the state, opens up spaces for articulations of practices and logics of a variety of social groups.

The effects of such a morphing of the state can be understood through two tropes. The first trope deals with the increasing convergence between governmental and non-governmental organisations in terms of their mode of operation. The second trope deals with the emergence of 'the social' as a site and object of governmental actions. These two tropes are described in the next chapter.

Chapter V

Everyday practices of GOs and NGOs: convergence and emergence of 'the social'

Chapter IV tried to change the terrain of the discussions surrounding the state by providing descriptions of changes in the formal architecture of the state imbricated in the mission mode of state-fabrication in Kalahandi. This morphing has had many effects. One of the key aspects of such morphings of the state has involved the incorporation of civil society organisations such as NGOs into the body of the state. This has happened through two related processes: first, the formation of NGOs by the government itself (called Government Organised NGOs or GONGOs) and, second, using already existing NGOs as delivery mechanisms of projects.

The formation of DWM, Kalahandi, and more than 300 Committees in the district of Kalahandi for the delivery of watershed development projects and programmes can be located in this context. DWM, Kalahandi and the Committees are registered societies under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. These are more or less exclusively dependent upon governmental funding or funding controlled and routed through the government for their existence. Therefore, these can be termed as GONGOs. Apart from the formation of GONGOs, the projectisation of watershed development work in the mission mode of state-fabrication has also involved the increasing delivery of these programmes through NGOs. In WORLP, Kalahandi, three out of the six PIAs are NGOs. One the main effects of these processes has been a growing convergence with respect to the everyday practices of GOs and NGOs, and the emergence of 'the social' as a trope for such locating everyday practice.

The burgeoning literature surrounding NGOs provides the context for the findings summarised in this chapter and the broad arguments offered. This chapter engages with only two important and relevant strands of literature surrounding NGOs. The first strand

surrounds the growth of GONGOs and the second strand surrounds the growth of NGOs as service delivery agents of governmental programmes.

As already mentioned in Chapter IV, such incorporation of NGOs into the workings of the state has been studied as involving GONGOs that are formed by states to go get access to funds and expertise that are relatively inaccessible to governmental agencies and to venture out into unconventional areas of work (Chen 2006). These are generally more prominent in relatively undemocratic countries (Mulligan 2007). In the field of human rights GONGOs have increasingly started playing a role that ends up providing legitimation in international forums for countries with records of violation of human rights (Martens 2003). In China GONGOs occupy a heterogeneous space with respect to their legal status, internationalisation, and depth of influence. But often the work of these organisations in China has grown much beyond what was initially mandated by the state (Wu 2003). But of late these have started rapidly growing in number in democratic countries such as India as well. Increasingly the growth of NGOs and GONGOs is seen as a part of a global shift surrounding neoliberal governmentality (Sharma 2006; Gupta and Sharma 2006).

As already mentioned, apart from the formation of NGOs by governments, the use of already existing NGOs for various kinds of governmental action is also in ascendance in much of the Third World (Lewis 2003). NGOs and governmental organisations are no longer seen as being at loggerheads; they are seen as complementing each others' roles in development (White 1999).

Development funds earlier administered through governmental organisations are increasingly funneled through NGOs (Miraftab 1997). They are increasingly seen as filling in important roles such as incubating innovative social programmes and in scaling them up (Pick et al 2008). This growth of NGOs as delivery agents of social services has to be seen in the context of the increasing criticism of governmental organisations as being wasteful (Sobhan 1998).

GOs and NGOs: convergence in practice

An important strand of literature that gives an account of the two parallel processes mentioned above generally tends to shift the discussions into the domain of politics. The growth of the service delivery role of NGOs is seen to result in the depoliticisation of development and a change in the earlier role as watchdogs of governmental action (Rahman 2006). In Third World contexts they are also seen as contributing towards depoliticisation of social movements such as women's movements (Goudar 2010). In the Indian context, NGOs are seen as becoming central to the reproduction of statist ideologies because of the increased service delivery nature of their work even when they espouse an agenda of empowerment and politicisation (Kamat 2002).

There is already a growing body of literature that suggests that the formal procedures of governmental and non-governmental organisations have more commonalities than acknowledged (White 1999). Instead of trying to show how NGOs are becoming similar to the state organisations, this section shows that the increased incorporation of non-state organisational forms into the body of the state and the parallel process of provisionalisation of the state (detailed in Chapter IV) have led to the NGOisation of the state. This section shows this by giving an account of the way watershed development workers make sense of their work and the ways in which the organisations function, and particular forms of organisational practice emerge.

<u>NGOisation of government: case of the review meeting</u>

Within the first three months of starting fieldwork in Kalahandi I had occasion to attend a monthly review meeting of the governmental Project Implementing Agency (PIA) that was being intensively studied for doctoral fieldwork. The relevant PIA-in-charge at that point of time was Mr. Kundu. His home district was the neighbouring district of Bolangir, and like most other government staff on deputation to DWM, Kalahandi, he was from the soil conservation department. In addition to the 10 microwatersheds of the WORLP project, he was handling 23 microwatersheds belonging to other projects for a

large part of the duration of fieldwork. Therefore, when this review meeting was happening he had a relatively large number of staff under his command.

For this meeting I accompanied the PIA-in-charge from his place of residence to the office. Mr. Kundu lived in Bhawanipatna, the district headquarters. But his office was located in a rented house just in the outskirts of the block headquarters of Kumursinga. This office lay at a distance of around 35 km from his place of residence. Like his place of residence, the office was also housed in a rented house that belonged to a local, business-owning Marwadi family[38]. Whenever I visited the office, it was mostly empty of the staff. Once in a while one bumped into the odd secretary or the president of a watershed committee. Otherwise most of the staff was supposed to be on the field.

The office did not have much furniture. Most of the chairs in the office were made up of cheap plastic apart from a slightly grand set of chairs in the room reserved for the PIA-in-charge. In fact, the office gave out the impression of half-heartedness and as if the office staff was going to shift out sometime soon. Nothing looked settled. Investing in buildings and furniture in the district and the state watershed missions was discouraged as this was seen as 'wasteful' expenditure and creation of fixed assets was seen, more often than not, as a liability by the higher officers in the project. But this office was conveniently located and allowed easy access to everyone. Therefore, it was never completely empty of people. Every time one passed the office on the highway one would see at least a couple of motorcycles parked in front of the office. But the office definitely did not have the hustle and bustle one associates with government offices, and was more or less empty of stationery and files. In fact most of the files were housed in the home of Mr. Kundu, and on many days a young man who was the computer operator could be seen typing away reports on a computer in a corner of the office.

On the day of the meeting, the PIA and I left at around 10.00 in the morning when the meeting itself was scheduled around 10.30. We left in the office car, dropped his

[38] Most houses that are rented out in Kumursinga belong to Marwadis. They form the richest and the most influential part of the population in the town.

daughter who studied in the local Central School for her examinations, and then left for Kumursinga for the meeting. By the time we crossed Bhawanipatna and were on the highway it was 10 minutes past 10.00. I started asking the PIA questions about his career and family, and he answered all my questions with an easy familiarity. He also asked me questions about my educational background and my family which I answered. The highway was in terrible shape and it took us nearly 90 minutes to clear a 35 km stretch; we reached the office only around 11:45.

By that time a large number of the staff, around 20, had arrived, but not everyone had reached. So the meeting did not start immediately. We waited for the rest of the staff to arrive. The mood was raucous. There were people milling around, joking, staff of the opposite sex flirting with each other, and guys horsing around. It came to me as something of a shock. It did not feel like the review meeting of a government organisation at all. It felt like the experience-sharing workshop of some middle-sized grassroots NGO. By the time everyone arrived and the meeting started it was around noon. The attendance was more or less full and there was a shortage of chairs,[39] so some people sat on the window ledge. And the meeting then started in earnest. First attendance was taken in an informal manner. Two of the important project staff, a Livelihood Support Team member and a Watershed Development Team member, were on leave.

Just before the meeting started, Mr. Kundu went out to take a call on his mobile phone. In the meanwhile, everyone started talking about the strike that they had in February 2009. Before starting fieldwork in the watershed mission in Kalahandi, a scoping exercise was done regarding the work of the district administration in Kalahandi. On one of the visits to the Kalahandi district collector's office, I had seen a group of people sitting in *dharna*[40] in front of the gate of the collector's office with their representatives giving rousing speeches. It was the WDT staff agitating for better salaries and permanent postings. Later in informal interactions with the officers in charge of the PIAs, it came out that they in fact sympathised with most of the demands of the staff, but

[39] This was another feature of review meetings of the watershed mission. In every meeting there seemed to be a shortage of chairs. Everyone complained about it, but no one seemed to want to do anything about it.
[40] Dharna is a sit in for a protest. It is often used by striking workers as a tactic.

some demands, especially that of becoming permanent employees of DWM, Kalahandi, were seen as a little unrealistic. By the time of this review meeting, the strike had been withdrawn and things had settled down. In fact, a large number of the staff had not participated in the strike. Now a large part of the conversation in the absence of Mr. Kundu in the room was around whether the salaries of those who had participated in the strike and had not reported for work would be deducted or not.

One of the most surprising things for me was the way the lunch was conducted. Food for everyone, including me, was ordered from a restaurant close by. Those who wanted vegetarian food had to specify their order. Most people preferred and ordered non-vegetarian food. Later one WDT member told me that most of them would not turn up for review meetings regularly without the promise of free non-vegetarian meals. Dheeraj, a WDT member of the PIA, took the responsibility of getting the meals to the office. Two of the other staff also went with him to help. It took Dheeraj a long time to get back. By the time he returned, the meeting was about to get over, and he had missed most of the meeting. With the arrival of food, everyone started getting fidgety and things were wrapped up soon.

Since there were no tables, and there was a shortage of chairs all of us sat on the ground and started eating from our lunch packets. After 10 minutes or so, Mr. Kundu and the other officer also came and joined us for lunch. There was pleasant banter between the officers and the other staff. Mr. Kundu was pleasantly needling those who had participated in the strike. They also were ribbing him about not getting paid for the days on which they had struck work because after the strike they had worked overtime and had achieved the targets for the month.

What surprised me was that there was little of the overall symbolic and material hierarchy that operates in most government organisations (Singhi 1974; Dwivedi et al 1989; Kumar and Kant 2005; Gould 2010). Mr. Kundu had gotten the same meal packet as the rest of the staff and he also joined everyone in having food sitting on the floor when he could easily have had food in his room on the table. This was not merely true of

this particular review meeting. All the review meetings I attended at various levels of DWM, Kalahandi were characterised by an overall culture of informality. The officials seemed accessible to both lower-level project staff and members of the community. In the case of the DWM, Kalahandi, there seems to be a convergence of the organisational cultures of GO and NGO PIAs, with the governmental ones increasingly adopting the organisational culture of NGOs. This has to be seen in the context of academic literature that sees the culture of NGOs as being more accessible and informal compared to that of governmental organisations (Sooryamoorthy and Gangrade 2001; Lewis and Siddiqi 2003).

Comparing GO and NGO PIAs: staffing and contractualisation

Descriptions offered in the previous sub-sections point at the fact that government organisations working in the mission mode of state-fabrication have in many ways started resembling the ways of functioning of NGOs. There are other related processes through which there has been a convergence between the functioning of GOs and NGOs. One of these ways has been the staffing pattern and the contractualisation of work. This is borne out by an examination of the staffing pattern of the DWM, Kalahandi, and the two PIAs.

The PD, Mr. Nag, was on deputation from the soil conservation department. Two APDs (Additional Project Directors) were also on deputation from government departments. The APDs are supposed to support the PD's work on various thematic areas, such as finance, and natural resource management. The PD was also supported by the CBT (Capacity Building Team). During most of the period of fieldwork there were three CBTs; two of the CBTs were drawn from the open job market and they had substantial experience in the NGO sector in Odisha. Although the third CBT was also hired through open competition, he was drawn from the horticulture department.

In the NGO PIA, the PIA-in-charge was drawn from the NGO sector. He had done a masters' level course in development management, and after passing out he had spent most of his time working in the watershed/natural resources management sector.

Prior to joining as a PIA, he had worked close to five years with a leading NGO in Odisha in the sector of watershed development. Towards the beginning of fieldwork, there was no WDT engineer with the organisation, but within a few months an engineer joined whose training was in the trade of civil engineering. He had experience in the corporate sector, the NGO sector and had worked with the government as well. The accountant was from a village in the project area of WORLP. He had a B.Com degree and had worked for a few years as a secretary for one of the Committees. Sudhir Padhan, WDT Social at the NGO PIA was a BA in economics, and had also worked as the secretary of the Committee of his village. One of the community organisors (CO) had a BA from a local college. His primary work experience had been working as a labourer and then as a supervisor at a garment factory in Uttar Pradesh. For most of the period of fieldwork, there was only one LST member in the PIA. For the first half it was Hara (LST member, livelihoods). For most part of his career (after a correspondence Master's degree from Utkal University in sociology), he had worked with a leading voluntary organisation in Bhubaneswar, the capital of Odisha. The second LST member was also drawn from the NGO sector. For a couple of months, both the LST members worked in the organisation and then Hara quit to join another watershed project as an LST member in a neighbouring district with a GO PIA.

The GO PIA-in-charge had two LST members all throughout fieldwork. One of them was a PhD degree holder in sociology from Utkal University, Bhubaneswar. Prior to joining the WORLP project he had worked for nearly two and half years in a leading NGO of Kalahandi. The other one was from Western Odisha, from Nuapada district. He had substantial work experience with a leading NGO from Western Odisha for more than eight years, out of which a significant amount of time was spent in supervising watershed-related interventions. For a large part of the period of fieldwork, the CO was also drawn from the NGO sector and belonged to coastal Odisha. Nirakar, the WDT social, had a Master's degree in sociology from Utkal University, and had prior experience as a teacher and as a community worker for an NGO. The WDT engineer had worked for a leading NGO of the region in a neighbouring district before joining the GO PIA.

As these short profiles of the staff of both the GO and the NGO PIAs show, a large number of all of these people had worked with projects (apart from WORLP) that had significant investments by the government. This kind of experience base of the staff seems to be representative. All of them, apart from the staff of the line departments who were on deputation, were working on the project as contractual staff. It also must be mentioned here that although the WDT members of CDI, the NGO PIA, received their salaries from WORLP, they ended up doing work for the other projects and initiatives of the organisation as well. Thus, the WDT staff at the NGO PIA were as much the workers of the NGO as they were workers of a governmental project, i.e. WORLP.

One of the results of this contractualisation of work has meant that there is a significant turnover of staff. The project's guidelines demanded that the WDT engineer must be a degree holder; many posts remained vacant. Alternatively one had to hire relatively incompetent people or see engineers leaving the project on a regular basis. Towards the beginning of fieldwork in the field sites of the NGO PIA, there was no WDT engineer with the organisation. Estimates of earth-work and other kinds of work are mandatory according to the project guidelines of WORLP. As a result, progress of work, especially NRM-related work, was happening at a very slow pace. An engineer joined for a few months, but he also left after getting better opportunities in the corporate sector elsewhere in Odisha. The WDT engineer in the government PIA in Kumursinga was widely perceived as incompetent and rarely ventured into the field for work. But due to the non-availability of engineers, he was not thrown out of work. There was also some lateral movement of staff within the WDM, Kalahandi.

The experience of convergence

This sub-section flows up from the insights gained from the earlier discussions in this chapter and tries to answer this question—if there is an increased convergence between

the everyday practices of GO and NGO PIAs in DWM, Kalahandi, then how do the beneficiaries experience such a convergence?[41]

The way villagers saw the watershed staff did not vary much across the GO and the NGO PIAs. Although the villagers saw 'the watershed' as a government project, the way they related to and interacted with the watershed staff was different from their interactions with officials from other kinds of governmental organisations especially from the line departments such as Revenue Department. For example, almost all Committee members had the mobile number of the PD, DWM, Kalahandi. I often saw them calling up the PD even slightly late in the evening (say around 8.00 pm) and discuss minute details of the work of the Committees. This kind of access to a higher government official would not be possible in most line departments, and villagers often remarked about this. On being asked which departments staff visit the villages the most, most villagers invariably replied that it was the watershed staff. This familiarity seems to have resulted in contempt for the officials. I often saw village-level functionaries of the Committees complain about PIAs-in-charge in a roundabout fashion to the PD even when the concerned officer was around. Villagers seem to have started treating officials, even middle-level ones, of a government project, in a very familiar fashion.

Case of a committee meeting

To illustrate this, details of what transpired in a monthly Committee meeting in the village of Kusumpadar may be pertinent. We were sitting around in the office of the Committee in the village of Kusumpadar on a hot Tuesday afternoon. At the time scheduled for the beginning of the meeting only three of us were there: the Secretary Mr. Kulamani Sahu, a member of the Committee and I. It was already 12.30 pm, when the meeting was supposed to start at noon. The office was a small room just outside the home of the secretary, and he had rented it out to the Committee for a sum of Rs 200. The room had a low-sloping roof with tiles and on that day, it looked particularly disheveled. It was

[41] For quantitative data on comparisons of people's experience with the state as framed through WORLP please refer to Appendix 5.

full of gunny sacks packed with rice, and there was hardly any space left for sitting. We were sitting on all the three chairs available, with a *charpoi* lying askew, leaning on the wall.

The fourth person to arrive was Mr. Routray, a retired government official who now worked as a WDT member for the governmental PIA. He was more than 65-years-old during fieldwork, and had been working with the PIA for WORLP from the very beginning of the project in the district. He was jovial, and generally did not allow most things to ruffle him. He was generally perceived by the committee members as being negligent, and as not paying enough attention to his work. For example, one of the chief grudges of committee members was that although Sundays and other holidays were convenient days for most of them to have meetings, they never took place on those days in Kusumpadar. Mr. Routray had made it very clear to the Committee that he would not turn up on holidays if he were to be called.

When he landed up in the committee office that Tuesday, I got up and greeted him. No one else did, and the secretary very reluctantly offered him a chair that was broken. Since I had already gotten up, I offered my chair to Mr. Routray, and after having pulled the charpoi down sat on it. After the initial greetings and pleasantries got over, Mr. Routray asked the secretary about work, and the latter started complaining about the president and his general non-cooperation in implementing the works of the Committee. Around this time, Sarang Sahu (a committee member and a relative of the secretary) entered the room and greeted Mr. Routray. Then he [Sahu] suddenly flared up and shouted, "This constantly blaming others has to stop. I am sick and tired of hearing excuses of why the work is not happening. Now I want to see work. I don't care for anyone—the secretary can go to hell, the president can go to hell, the point person [referring to Mr. Routray] can go to hell, even the PIA and the PD can go to hell. It does not really matter. If responsibilities are not fixed today regarding why work is not taking place, and we do not figure out mechanisms to ensure work, I am going to lock the president, the secretary and the point person in this room and go. I do not care what happens after that." By the time Sarang Sahu was done with his tirade, a couple of other

committee members had turned up as well as a group of five women SHG members who had come to apply for a loan. This was not a stray incident, and there were many such instances.

Not many people would dare to do so with respect to a staff from a line department such as Revenue or Forest (Gupta 1995; Kumar and Kant 2005). This is despite the fact that the villagers do see 'the watershed' as a government project, and the staff of the project as governmental staff. Most of the PIA-level watershed staff felt resentful about the fact that despite working for the government they were not getting the due respect and deference from the project beneficiaries and the village-level functionaries of the watershed mission.

For example, Nirakar would perpetually complain that nobody offers him even a glass of water when he visits people for work in their houses; he resented having to ask for water. Similarly Mr. Routray would complain that people did not wait for him when he had to do some work with them. He also resented the fact that he had to keep on waiting for the secretaries and presidents to turn up for work. Thus, not only have the everyday practices of governmental organisations changed under the mission-mode of state-fabrication, but villagers cognise these changes and respond to governmental staff in a differential manner.

The first sub-section of the preceding section showed that in some key respects such as informality of the workplace and accessibility to the communities, government organisations in the mission mode of state-fabrication have started behaving like NGOs. A key aspect of such convergence has been the contractualisation of work in the mission-mode of state-fabrication, and the lateral flow of personnel between GOs and NGOs. This has meant that staff of the governmental project under study are no longer objects of respect and fear, and the erstwhile awe accorded to government officials has decreased.

Mission mode of state-fabrication and the emergence of the social

The preceding section of this chapter discussed how the mission mode of doing government and the attendant growth of the quotidian logistics of state-fabrication can be understood through the trope of convergence between governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations. The present section presents another such trope—the emergence of 'the social' as a site and object of state-fabrication. This is counter-posed against the narratives surrounding political society that have tried to account for processes of multiplication of technologies of governmentality and the simultaneous morphing of the state (Chatterjee 2004). In this formulation, Chatterjee argues that the domain of negotiation and claim-making with the state that the various subaltern social groups engage with maps out on the terrain of political society, the domain of civil society being the preserve of rights bearing 'citizens'.

This section argues that we need to shift the terms of discourse from claim-making upon the state (political society being the domain which helps us locate such claim-making by communities) to the state itself. If we do this, then one sees that there has been the growth of the social as a trope of governmental action in the ways such action takes place and the ways in which it is understood. The watershed-plus approach of WORLP as operationalised under the mission-mode of state-fabrication in the DWM, Kalahandi, can be seen as a way in which the state is being socialised and being embedded deep inside village society. The way the project is structured—with all the work supposed to be happening through the village-level Committees—is itself a significant move at socialisation. This change has meant that 'the social' is being incorporated through certain institutional assemblages such as microwatershed development committees, SHGs, and user groups. This is evident in the way in which the project staff of WORLP perceive the emergence of the social as an increasingly important domain of intervention for the state.

As mentioned in Chapter II, a significant aspect of the mission mode of state-fabrication has involved the growing importance of social technologies. The growth and

deployment of these technologies and their imbrication with village society under the quotidian logistics and the tactics (as detailed in Chapter IV) has engendered the emergence of the social as a site, trope and object of governmental action.

The perceived importance of 'the social'

It was a warm day in March—one of those days when one feels that spring in Odisha is not a concoction of the imagination of a slightly delusional poet. There was not even a nip of coolness in the air, but neither was it hot. I was travelling inside an old, ratty ambassador car with Mr. Mahanty, a WDT member working with one of the governmental PIAs, to attend a meeting of a Committee. The previous month the meeting could not take place due to a lack of quorum. This time the secretary had sent an emergency notice to all the committee members to attend the meeting, and Mr. Mahanty was hoping that the meeting would take place.

He was a reticent man and spoke slowly emphasising every word that he uttered. He was curious about me and my research, and after the initial pleasantries, he looked at me in amusement and said, "Your work sounds interesting; during our student days we could not even think that such kind of work was possible." After talking for some time about his masters dissertation, his interest in research and his regret in not having followed a career in research, he said, "These days 'social' is very important." He gave the example of the watershed mission, and said, "See, at every level of the project there is some social person; at the district level there is a social CBT member, at the PIA level there is a WDT social and at the village level there is a CLW social. Recently they are thinking about eliminating the posts of the CLW, but one hears that the post of the CLW social will remain. This is only to be expected. When I started working many years back, it was just about doing technical work and distributing stuff. Now it's all about motivating people. When we started working, we never thought that things will come to such a pass. Now we have to be servile to these ignorant villagers to get their own work done. Not that I mind it too much. It's after all people's work. But I am not used to this,

that's all that's there to it. Now for young people such as you, this new focus on the social is of course an opportunity."

As mentioned earlier, this focus on the social is not merely there in the narratives that the project staff tell one another and to other curious observers such as this researcher. It is there in the very architecture of the project itself, including the way the accounting heads of the project work. There are heads that are generally perceived as 'technical', while others are perceived to be 'social'; the technical heads are NRM and Community Development Fund (CDF) and the 'social' heads are RF (revolving fund) and grant. The money budgeted under the RF head was mandated to be given to SHGs. The tasks of the WDT social and CLW social, along with those of some of the LSTs, were supposed to focus on the work of the SHGs and other aspects of livelihood enhancement, such as making sure that the livelihood grants were put to productive use.

The social as 'messy'

The 'social', in many accounts of work given by staff of the project, was seen as something messy. Once, in the NGO PIA, all the staff, apart from the PIA himself and the WDT engineer, had gone on leave because of a long weekend. The work in the village of Kalampadā has been stuck for quite some time now, and even the committee meetings were not taking place. The secretary of Kalampadā had fixed up the meeting at a time when the meeting of another Committee was also taking place. Thus, the PIA went to attend the meeting of the other village, and sent the WDT engineer to Kalampadā, along with me.

This WDT member was very reluctant to go, and we left a little late. For a change, when we arrived in the venue, the village school, everyone was already there including the president and the secretary. When the meeting started it came out that the reason for the stalemate in the work of the Committee was something relatively small, but something that was symbolically a big issue. One of the committee members who had taken the contract as the head of a user group to construct a drain in one of the hamlets of

the village (as a community development initiative through WORLP) had apparently done substandard work, and had overcharged the Committee. The problem was that he had refused to share the spoils with anyone else. In the meeting, people almost came to blows, but the WDT member did nothing to diffuse the situation. Ultimately the relevant Committee member agreed to donate a couple of thousand rupees to a temple that was being constructed in the village, and agreed to give bricks for the construction of a platform around a big tree in a public place for the use of everyone.

On the way back to the office when the WDT member was asked as to why he did not intervene in the meeting at all, he said, "It's beneath me to get embroiled in village politics; I am much better off dealing with estimates. Merely because the relevant staff are absent, I need not deal with all this messy social work.' He then gave a comparative account of the work he had done in the same block, but with a government PIA as an engineering WDT member in another project. According to him, that project did not focus on the 'so-called' social aspects of work that much and, therefore, the 'real' work happened in a much more efficient fashion. He gave the example of the village Laimerā where he had constructed three water harvesting structures on a single stream, and he referred to this work as a 'visible' piece of work that people still remember him for.

This was not an isolated case. The discomfort of the engineering staff in dealing with non-technical/social aspects of the project was very much evident in the way they did not want to fill in for social WDT members when the latter were on leave. Even senior project staff, especially some officers drawn from the soil conservation department, saw the overtly social aspects of the project as 'messy'. Many times in interviews they would voice concerns about the deteriorating quality of the 'technical' aspects of the work because of the need to factor in what they termed as 'social concerns'. Thus, 'the social' was construed as something messy due to the fact that it was difficult to deal with and manage, and it was seen as something that adversely affected the quality of the technical aspects of the work of watershed development.

The social as a marker between governmental organisations and NGOs

Many officers in charge of the PIAs, APDs and CBT members saw 'the social' as a distinguishing marker between GO PIAs and NGO PIAs. Once after a review meeting held at the district headquarters, a government PIA-in-charge elaborated informally over lunch about the differences between the way he worked and the way NGO PIAs worked. He said, "See, the NGOs are slightly better than us in terms of the work related to the social aspects of the project, and this should be acknowledged. Since they have been working in these areas for quite a few years, they also have a better understanding of social aspects of these kinds of projects. Moreover they are used to work in a contractual fashion, therefore, they find it much easier to deal with the contractual staff of the projects hired under the District Watershed Mission. To be honest, we government PIAs who are mostly on deputation are yet to get a hang of the ways of dealing with the contractual staff. But we are definitely better at doing the technical work. Most of these NGO PIAs, in Kalahandi and elsewhere, have never employed proper engineers, and these organisations have very little experience in doing construction work. So the villagers can lead them on whereas no villager can take us for a ride. The NGOs also have better experience in these new things such as community mobilisation and awareness building. But we are also learning. After all, all this new social nonsense is not rocket science."

Narratives surrounding 'the social' were also used as a marker to distinguish between the earlier way of doing watershed-related interventions by the soil-conservation department, and the work now being done under the aegis of OWDM. The higher level staff of DWM, Kalahandi see this difference through the trope of participation. As a senior official voiced in an interview, "Earlier when the soil conservation department used to work on watersheds there was no community participation. An engineer would go and survey the area and depending upon the availability of funds and the needs of the watershed he would draw up estimates depending upon technical criteria. And only when the actual earth work started, people would come to know that a project has come to their village. Now there is community participation because of decentralised planning.

Therefore, the importance of the social aspects of the work has grown quite a bit." This focus on the 'social' as a marker of difference posits certain aspects of the work of the project as not being 'social'. For example, the work of accounting and auditing is not seen as being 'social' but as requiring technical expertise that is difficult to acquire.

Emergence of 'the social' and imbrications in the field

The way WORLP is structured as a project—with all the work supposed to be carried out through the village-level Committees—is in itself a significant move at 'socialisation'. This change has meant that 'the social' is being incorporated into the machinery of the government through certain institutional assemblages such as watershed committees, SHGs, and user groups. This focus on 'the social' has interacted with many other processes in the field with some interesting results, one of which has been that the project has aided vastly increased sightings of the state. Most of the villagers identified project staff from WORLP as the most visible amongst all government departments. The creation of the Committees and the fact that work happened through them meant that at least one government staff visited the village at least once a month to attend the monthly meetings of the Committees. Similarly the work surrounding the small grants and revolving funds involved frequent visits by the staff of the project of both GO and NGO PIAs for facilitation and monitoring. Thus, one of the more important results of the focus on 'the social' has been to increase the number of sightings of government staff and in effect the state itself.

As already discussed in Chapter IV the focus on the social has also involved dramatically increasing the number of direct beneficiaries. In many ways this spreading things thin and the ensuing increased sightings of the state seems to be built into the very project architecture. For example, one of the goals given to all project staff, and especially the staff hired to deal with overtly social aspects of the project, has been to ensure that at least 80 per cent of households in the project areas are covered through SHGs. This is sometimes resented by the staff as it expands the scope of their work, and makes them a lot more 'accessible' to villagers.

The ‘social’ and the attendant establishment and strengthening of institutions such as SHGs have resulted in the increasing penetration of micro-credit institutions in many areas. Because of the existence of a robust network of these SHGs, commercial microcredit institutions have found it easy to operate in these villages. Most of the SHGs in the microwatersheds in the project area of the government PIA have a relatively poor record of ensuring the return of the loans received through the WORLP as revolving funds. But it will be perhaps unfruitful to judge these institutions as ineffective on these grounds. In creating these SHGs and handholding them in the initial part of their existence, the project has created institutions that then have gone on to perform other and, sometimes, similar roles.

Many women stated that by being part of SHGs, they have been able to become ‘forward’; earlier they would not have the confidence to talk to a government official, and other outsiders. But now they are able to do so. This they see as a direct result of being a member of the SHGs, and, thus, a result of their experience of trainings, exposure visits to other areas and the increased opportunities of interacting with the outside world in the village itself.

Another important aspect of the emergence of ‘the social’ is the importance that is given to ‘process’ in WORLP. The process dimensions of the social components of the work are stressed upon to a greater extent compared to the same dimensions of the ‘technical/engineering’ aspects of the project’s work. The way auditors would want to ensure whether certain social goals were fulfilled or not was by insisting that certain indicators and processes of the social components of the project’s work were consistently followed; consequently a large part of the work happened so that auditors could be satisfied as and when auditing happened.

A focus on ‘the social’ is built into project design of WORLP, as well as the actual everyday practice of the project and increasingly in the work of the DWM, Kalahandi. This can be seen in the context of the growth of watershed development as an

alternative approach to provisioning water resources, especially in the marginal areas of the country, a large proportion of which are characterised by rain-fed agriculture (Kerr 2002). Following critiques of approaches to watershed development that emphasised biophysical criteria, concerns surrounding non-biophysical issues such as those involving livelihoods, especially those in the dry-land areas, have come to the forefront (Turton 2000; Kerr 2002).

The growth of projects such as WORLP and the increasing importance given to social aspects of watershed development such as livelihoods and the use of social technologies such as district-level watershed missions, village-level watershed development committees and SHGs can be understood as part of a process of change in governmental interventions that has involved a relative shift in emphasis from the technical to the social (both as sites and tools). Emergence of 'the social' is seen as an important marker of difference between the work of the NGOs and GOs, on the one hand, and between the work of the OWDM and the state soil conservation department, on the other. The emergence of 'the social' has resulted in increasing the sightings of the state by villagers. It has also resulted in the creation and partial strengthening of new village-level institutions such as SHGs that have gone on to play other, albeit similar roles in village society. It has also facilitated deeper imbrications between village society and the state.

Conclusion

Following the overall theoretical and methodological turns detailed in chapters I, II and IV, this chapter has shifted discussions surrounding the politics of so-called population groups in India, and the way they make claims and act upon the state, to a discussion surrounding the effects of tactics of state-fabrication. This chapter showed that two key effects of the mission mode of state-fabrication are the growing convergence between governmental and non-governmental organisations, and the emergence of *the social* as a site, object and trope of governmental action. The chapter then argued that this can be

seen in the broader context of growth of social technologies associated with the quotidian logistics of state-fabrication.

The question is how do we see such changes and make sense of them? If we do not want to see India's present as a mere variation of Western Europe's past, the theory of political society is the only theory coming from the global South that seems to give us tools to discuss changes happening in social formations in the South. The question, therefore, remains that if we jettison political society, how do we understand differences between the global South and the West? There have been scholars who have argued that we can interrogate the global march of development and modernity by formulating a concept such as regional modernities in which 'region' is not a spatial descriptor in between the local and the global but as a specific site of operations of socio-political, economic and cultural forces. But in this discussion what is foregrounded is the nation-state as a region (Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal 2003).

There is a need to take the original theoretical impetus for the formulation of political society on board—this is a question of difference. If we need to understand the politics of communities and the way they interact with and perceive the state, it cannot happen at a level of India or the global South. Such interactions happen at the regional level, and these are mediated through vernacular formulations. In the case of Odisha one such important vernacular formulation seems to be the one of toutary. The next chapter, Chapter VI, aims at understanding toutary as a social domain of actions and perceptions.

Chapter VI

Vernacular perceptions of state-fabrication: understanding the domain of toutary

Introduction

The argument offered in this chapter is that in Kalahandi the dominant way in which the state is perceived, commented upon, made sense of and understood is through the vernacular domain of *toutary*. This chapter argues that in the context of Kalahandi, Odisha, it is more useful to undertake the mapping of such a vernacular domain rather than invoke theoretical domains such as political society to understand the emergent mode of state-fabrication, and the ways of perceptions of the state by communities associated with it. It tries to draw a contour of a map towards understanding the domain of toutary. In doing this, the chapter takes the insights by Kaviraj (2010b) forward by contesting his claims. According to Kaviraj (ibid) one can locate the fault-lines of politics in India across an elite/vernacular axis with supra-regional politics revolving around Sanskrit/Persian in the pre-colonial period and around English during the colonial and postcolonial periods. This chapter argues against the presence of a generic domain of vernacular politics across regions in India; it argues for a case of regional specificity. Second, this chapter also argues that such domains are not necessarily always completely reducible to domains of 'politics' or of claim-making upon the state. Domains such as toutary are also sites for ethical critiques of emergent forms of state-fabrication and governmental action.

There is a strand of social scientific literature that posits corruption (Gupta 1995) and the general 'dirtiness' of politics (Ruud 2001) as the dominant ways in which 'the political' and 'the state' are cognised in India. In the field sites chosen for doctoral fieldwork, narratives surrounding corruption did not seem to dominantly frame peoples' perceptions of the various governmental schemes, projects and programmes in as overwhelming a fashion as would seem from the recent literature. Most of the stories that men and women told during communal defecation, in front of *bhāti*s[42] or during self-help

[42] Tills of locally brewed alcohol.

group meetings were about *toutary*. Narratives surrounding toutary seem to be the frame through which people seem to cognise and make sense of the state.

The way most stories surrounding the 'Indian political' get told, the dominant impression that we get is that it is an amoral universe.[43] The way people deal with the normative aspect of the state apparatus can indeed be described as amoral. In WORLP people do not pay watershed development fees for the benefits that they get from the project, they sell government grants (for example, subsidised seeds), and they fudge documents. But the concern with ethical practice also seems to be central to what people see as good action. Here perhaps mention can be made of the work of the Japanese sociologist Tanabe (2007) who posits the idea of the moral society to argue that we need to posit this domain to understand the ideas surrounding ethical action as understood and articulated by rural communities, especially the subaltern groups. In doing this he extends the formulation of political society by Chatterjee (2006). Tanabe (2007) argues that the actions of subaltern communities are not always articulated and framed within the domain of 'politics' and often invoke a conjoined/hybrid ethical vision which partly borrows from subaltern conceptualisations of morality and partly from constitutional morality to interrogate dominant processes of politics. He sees this as congealing into the domain of moral society as opposed to political society.

What the discussion of toutary in this chapter aims to show is that we do not need to posit a different conceptual domain, that of moral society, to understand ethical practice of the people in rural India or the domain of political society to understand the interactions of communities with the state. The perceptions and practices of state-fabrication in Kalahandi, including those in the mission mode deploying quotidian logistics, can be said to congeal into the vernacular domain of toutary. These descriptions, perceptions and the domain of toutary perhaps cannot take the place of a conceptual or theoretical alternative to the formulations of political society. But they help us build up an alternative case, a point of departure, for taking up further conceptual work.

[43] For a strong version of this argument, refer to Brass (1994)

This chapter provides a brief introduction to the social domain of toutary and teases out a few of its key aspects. Three sections follow this brief introduction. The first attempts an expository strategy where toutary is compared to similar phenomena such as politics and corruption, and it is shown that although toutary has many characteristics that overlap with these phenomena, it is not reducible to any one of them. The second section provides an argument through analogy where it is shown that toutary as a domain and the *touter* as an agent can be understood better if we compare villagers' perceptions with *devi*[44]s and *devtā*s[45], and with *jhākar*s[46] as mediators between the domains of the deities and the domains of people. The final section provides evidence for understanding the villagers' narratives surrounding toutary as an ethical critique of the practices of state-fabrication.

Toutary: an introduction

During doctoral fieldwork whenever a villager would be asked about the impact of the watershed project, she would almost always give the answer that it has increased toutary in the village. This was true of villagers cutting across genders, classes, castes and hamlets. All kinds of villagers saw increase in what they called as toutary as the most important effect of WORLP.

But this increasing trend of toutary was not seen in a unique relationship to WORLP per se. The work of the watershed in this case was seen as paralleling many other new governmental interventions in increasing toutary. The MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) of the central government, and the two rupee rice scheme of the government of Odisha[47] were also blamed for increased toutary in the villages. The two-rupee rice scheme was especially blamed for increasing

[44] In the context of fieldwork devi means a female deity specific to a clan or a jāti.
[45] In the context of fieldwork devtā means a male deity specific to a clan or a jāti.
[46] Jhākars are local priests who propitiate the deities of the community on ritual occasions.
[47] This scheme provides 25 kg rice at Rs 50 to all ration-card-holding families in the KBK region in South-West Odisha and to BPL-card-holding families in the rest of the state.

toutary in the village by increasing labour insubordination and creating 'free leisure time' for the *sukhbāsi*s or landless labourers.

Toutary is seen not as a marker and effect of this specific watershed project – WORLP - alone; it is something to do with the increasing penetration of village society by the state that seem to have intensified with emergent forms of governmental interventions, which specifically target new communities and marginal areas through social technologies. As a social domain, toutary is the interstitial space created through interactions of the state with village society. This domain is not a new domain created only by changing processes of state-fabrication since the long 1980s. With the growth of a regime of tactility with the mission mode of state-fabrication, this domain brought about by the intersection of state and society seems to be expanding in size, scope and effects. Corruption as a phenomenon (as far as the perceptions of villagers and lower-level project staff goes) seem to inhere inside the state system whereas toutary as a phenomenon lies at the intersections between state and society.

This domain is populated by a specific kind of social agent who is called a touter. A touter is not a mere fixer or broker or an agent. He seems to do some amount of brokering; but his role and the way he is perceived by villagers is not exhausted by mere acts of brokering. Similarly, the activities of a touter involve politicking but he is not necessarily someone involved in party-based politics. He is all this and more; he is the social agent who lubricates the seeping of the everyday state into the crevices of village society.

Toutary: comparisons with rājaniti, corruption and politics

A story pertaining to toutary

It is a pleasant winter morning in Kusumpadar, a salubrious Saturday morning to be more precise. My *basā*[48] is a largish room in the school compound of the Kusumpadar M.E.

[48] Temporary place of residence.

School. The school is an old one, has seven classes, more than 200 students and four regular teachers and one Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) teacher. The headmaster, Mr. Samal, is from the neighbouring village of Kadampada, a dark man in his mid-fifties around five feet eight inches tall, he carries with him an aura of permanent disaffection. I have rarely seen him smile. But when I walk into the school this Saturday morning he suddenly looks up at me and gives me a smile that is disconcerting with its suddenness. I smile back and he beckons me to him. He's sitting with Narayan Bag, the SSA teacher of the school. Both of them are sitting outside the classroom on a couple of chairs facing each other soaking in the warm January sun and both seem content and at peace with themselves.

I have heard some very interesting stories about Mr. Samal. He is politically well-connected. Reputedly, he is the right-hand man of the sitting MLA from an assembly constituency in Kalahandi. During his earlier posting he used to sit at a hotel in Kumursinga, the closest town (around 8 km from Kusumpadar), and in one year he reportedly went to the school he was supposed to teach at for a grand total of eight days. He seems to have fallen on 'bad' times, and I see him in the school almost every day.

After I have stood there for some time I am offered a chair. I sit down and try and make conversation. Mr. Samal says it is increasingly difficult to teach in schools because one cannot discipline students any longer.[49] He then suddenly becomes solicitous about my work. This is a bit facile because by now the whole village knows that I have something to do with 'the watershed'. Moreover he had asked me the same question a couple of weeks back and I had replied in some detail. I again tell him about my work.

He suddenly becomes serious and tells me, "I cannot claim to know about the functioning of watershed projects in general. And I do not know what you have found out or are trying to find out in this village. But in my village in Kadampada the project has gotten into the hand of touters. We hear that the watershed is doing good work in other areas. But I have been running around our secretary trying to get work done. Mind you!

[49] Here he used the Odia word 'sāsana' that means both administering as well as disciplining.

Not personal work but work that will do good for the whole village. But for the last two years no work seems to be happening in our village." At this point Mr. Bag chipped in and said, "As you know, my village Sagupalla and Kadampada are part of one single watershed. In our village also therefore all work has stopped. There is no desire to work. Their minds are only focused on toutary [tānkara ta mana khāli jāin toutary re]."[50]

I then asked them whether it is because of the watershed project specifically that toutary has increased in their villages. They seemed to consider the question for a few moments and then Mr. Bag told me, "See sir, toutary has been prevalent in our villages for quite some time now. Our area is especially prone to toutary. Kumursinga is a 'commercial area' (used in original Odia). Therefore, there have traditionally been a lot of outsiders. But this has especially become worse over the last 10 or 15 years after the panchayats started getting a lot of money. Governmental money breeds toutary [jeunthi sarakāri tankā seithi toutary]." At this point Mr. Samal pitched in by saying, "Loka bee tike āji kāli sikhita hele, sarkār bisayare jānile, toutary na badhi aau gati achhi?" [People are getting educated and have come to know about the government, there is no way that toutary won't increase.]

Here Mr. Bag said, "See, our secretary is also a graduate. But you know how these people get their degrees now. Nobody studies, or does anything else. Just copy and pass. [Ei sarkāri kām kāji toutary badhichhe]—toutary has increased due to this work of the government. Education has no meaning. All these half-educated people—touters—are the illegitimate children of the government."

As the above slice of conversation from fieldwork illustrates toutary is seen to be (a) the result of penetration of rural society by the state, and (b) populated by social actors called touters. The following sub-sections attempts to answer the question: What is toutary? The explanatory strategy used in these sub-sections takes on the task of explaining what toutary is *not* rather than trying to define or explain what it is. This is

[50] This use of the word toutary in standard usage can mean two things; it can mean that they only want to commit acts of toutary and. The second usage/meaning posits toutary as a separate object/domain/'art.'

because there are some domains of sociality such as politics, *rājaniti* and corruption that parallel toutary, but as a domain of perception and action toutary is not subsumed completely by any of them. The way the word toutary is used in popular usage carries some shades of meanings that these domains connote, but it is not reducible to any one of these.

Toutary and rājaniti

As a child one of my most favourite Odia film songs was a song about *rājaniti* that went like this "pāna guā khaira guākāti āhā ki sundara rājaniti"—betel leaf, areca nuts and the nut-cutter, oh how beautiful is rājaniti. This seemingly nonsensical song has one of the more popular comic actors of the Odia film industry dressed up in the 'traditional' garb of an Odia politician going around with folded hands begging for votes.

The song captures one of the two distinct different shades of meaning associated with the word rājaniti in Odia. The first shade is the one associated with party politics in the formal sense. The second one, and the one that has greater usage, is more in the form of a verb and not a noun – rājaniti karibā or rājaniti paseibā that stand for creating dissension cleverly or creating factions for obtaining some objectives.

In contrast with the semantic richness and hybridity associated with rājaniti, toutary is simultaneously more ambiguous and yet simpler in the shades of connotations of social practices and ways of being that it carries with it. Often people were careful to distinguish between rājaniti and toutary. One of the most important and frequent usages of the word rājaniti by people in the field was as a verb. Once I had promised to get some medicine from the district headquarters for an acquaintance Asok from Kusumpadar village. But after reaching Bhawanipatna I forgot the name of the medicine. My mobile phone also lost all charge, and I could not ask him the name of the medicine. On reaching the village when I bumped into Asok, he naturally enquired about whether I had got the medicines or not. On listening to my negative answer and the explanation thereof, he gave me a wry smile and said, "Kāen kāji āgyān mor sāthe rājaniti kheluchhan?" [Sir,

why are you 'playing' rājaniti with me?] Thus, in this instance, doing politics carries a negative connotation—that of over-promising and under-delivering. But it does not carry the ethical charge of accusing someone of toutary. Given the asymmetries inherent in the relationship between me and Asok, he could not accuse me of doing 'toutary', but he could safely accuse me of 'rājaniti khelibā' or that of playing rājaniti.

Another story will try to make the differences between toutary and rājaniti clearer. In one of the villages where intensive fieldwork took place I had as my neighbours an elderly couple who were living separately from their sons. Every day before going to sleep, the husband Sudama Sahu would make it a point to talk to me, and one day we got talking about his *bārdhakya bhātā*. Bārdhakya bhātā is the monthly old age pension of Rs 200 that is paid by the Government of Odisha to the elderly over the age of 65. Sudama and his wife got it for nearly a decade, and one day some 7–8 years back first his and then his wife's pension were discontinued. He attributes this to toutary and *ahangkār*.[51] He told me that at that point of time one of his sons (he has two sons) got involved in rājaniti with Kadam Majhi, the gauntia'[52]s son. In the process he had to buy a motorcycle by hook or crook, since, as he put it, "Without mobility rājaniti is impossible. After he started riding around on the bike people started feeling jealous and they complained to higher officials. Because of the ahangkār of the villagers I and my wife lost our bhātā." His understanding of rājaniti is "eitā gute bhal dhandā nāine". [It is not a good occupation/business.]

Let me explicate his understanding of the various categories by relating another incident. It is 7.00 am in the morning and after having visited my favourite corner of the village's fallow lands for open defecation, and having had my morning glass of black tea, I come back to my room for completing my previous day's field notes. Sudama is waiting for me and asks me for a loan of Rs 100. He has never asked me for a loan and asks for it in a very shame-faced manner. He is nearing 80, and has an older generation's misgivings

[51] In standard Odia 'ahangkār' means ego-centeredness. But in the local dialect it refers the desire to put oneself first and not to think of others' rights and concerns at all.
[52] A Gauntia was the traditional headman of the village during pre-independence times in the princely state of Kalahandi. The gauntias enjoyed rights over the best of the village's agricultural land and were in charge of collecting the rent on the land from the villagers.

about borrowing, especially from a newcomer to the village who is more than 40 years younger to him. I lend him the money without asking for an explanation of the reason for which he needs the money. But he makes me sit and offers an explanation.

It transpires that he has to go to the block headquarters of Kamarlā to pursue his papers for the reapplication for getting the bhātā for himself and his wife. He was supposed to go with Mr. Janārdan Nag (a dalit man around 50-years-old, who is an ex-Sarpanch of the local panchayat, and is active in local electoral politics). The last two times Sudama had talked to him, he had called from my phone. But on both these occasions the ex-Sarpanch had failed to turn up at the promised time. Sudama's reading was that Mr. Nag feared the expense of money that would be involved in traveling to Kamarlā (a distance of 12–13 km from the village, but a considerable distance considering Sudama's old age) and had, therefore, failed to turn up on purpose on both the occasions. Sudama's reading was 'Eitā ki pilā ei Janārdan! Jadi tike Kamarlā kām ra kāji nāin nei pāri tāhele kentā rājaniti karuchhe ei pilā'. Pakkā touter gote. Tankāke jagi rājaniti heisi ke? [What kind of boy is this Janārdan! If this boy cannot take me to Kamarlā for this chit of a work, why is he doing rājaniti? He is a confirmed touter! Can one do rājaniti while trying to have one eye on the money one is spending?]

During the course of fieldwork, I never saw anyone being labeled as a touter in public. In fact, it would cause a great offense if someone were to label even a really good friend as a touter in public. This leads to one important distinction between rājaniti and toutary: rājaniti is largely seen as an amoral set of actions and practices, whereas toutary is seen as unethical.

Toutary and corruption

Narratives surrounding corruption increasingly frame academic discussions surrounding state–society relations in India (Gupta 1995; Pani 1998; Bhattacharyya and Ghose 1998; Ruud 2000; Jeffrey 2002; Davis 2004; Shah 2009). Corruption is seen as the key trope that frames the perception of the state in India (Gupta 1995). Scholars have also

described the processes of cultural embeddedness of everyday practices of corruption and its performative aspects (Ruud 2000), and it has also been described as a spectator sport (Bhattacharya and Ghose 1998). Other scholars have argued against promoting a culturalist argument about corruption (Shah 2009; Mukhopadhyay 2011). Increasingly ethnographic accounts of corruption are adding to our understanding of state–society relations and corruption is seen as an important trope that frames such accounts (Ruud 2000).

In this context, this sub-section, extending the arguments made in Chapter I, II and IV, posits that narratives surrounding corruption do not exhaust the narrative and theoretical possibilities surrounding state–society relationship in India. Toutary is an important category to negotiate with at such a conjuncture. This sub-section tries to sketch out the reasons as to why narratives surrounding toutary cannot be subsumed within narratives of corruption. The material presented in this sub-section argues that toutary cannot be read as only corruption or misappropriation of governmental funds. Second, it argues that practices that would be read as corruption[53] when they take place deep within the recesses of the state are seen as toutary when the agents of these actions occupy the interstitial spaces between state and society. One of the ways in which the various nuances of the word toutary and the way in which most of the staff working in this project saw this social phenomenon can be mapped out is by looking what happened in the village of Gaudmal.

The work of WORLP in the village of Gaudmal in the project area of CDI had stopped for quite some time. It was often attributed to the lack of focus by the secretary, Sasi, in the work of the Committee. Recently he had left his wife and children, and had got involved in an affair with a recently widowed woman from a neighbouring village. The story doing the rounds was that this had obviously affected the family life of Sasi, and he was finding it increasingly difficult to find time and energy to deal with the work of the project.

[53] 'Corruption' was often used as an Odia word. Sometimes its various synonyms such as lāmcha or khāeebā (literally 'eating') were used for officials taking bribes or politicians or government officials appropriating developmental funds.

One day a review meeting of the functioning of the Committees involving the staff of the NGO PIA, and presidents and secretaries of the ten Committees under its management was scheduled at 10.00 am at the local office at Malipada. Not a single secretary, president or CLW had turned up by that time. Nearly half the expected number turned up by around 11.30 am, and the meeting started. It was noticed that not a single participant from the 'Gaudmal watershed' had come. After an hour or so of desultory discussions it was very clear that there was something else on the minds of everyone present, and everyone was just waiting for someone to start that thread. In this expectant atmosphere, someone said that he had seen Sasi at Kamarlā, a neighbouring town, the other day, and he pretended as if he could not see him and did not meet his eye. This set the cat among the pigeons. All of a sudden everyone started talking at the same time. The PIA-in-charge, Mr. Samal tried imposing some order, but to no avail. So he let the discussions continue.

It came out that Sasi had been arrested and kept in police custody at the Kamarlā police station due to allegations of financial malpractices or what was called in Odia as herpher, a word that literally means misappropriation. Like most secretaries, he was involved in many other activities apart from the work of the watershed project and farming. In this case he (like many other secretaries) was an insurance agent for many insurance companies. Sasi used to mostly sell policies of the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC). Apparently he had failed to deposit most of the premiums collected from the customers over the last few months.

During the discussion, most of the other people present, especially the other secretaries, did not seem to demonise him at all. In fact, almost everyone was very sympathetic to him; most people attributed his current crop of 'difficulties' to his social failing in not sticking to his wife, and for having taken a second wife, a widow with children. Most of the criticism that was deployed against him was directed more towards this 'social failing' rather than any 'moral failure'. It seemed that the local police had got complaints from quite a few of the policy-holders, and he was given time to return the

money to them over a period of few months. But he took the matter lightly, and did not return the money. This forced the hands of the police who were under constant pressure from the customers, and they had to arrest him. The general consensus was not that Sasi was a 'bad' man, but that he was a foolish one; that he should have borrowed money from a local *sāhukār* or moneylender, and paid the money to the customers and a cut to the police, and could have escaped arrest.

Over the next few days, Sasi failed to produce the money even after being arrested. His brother who had a regular government job could have produced bail and had him released. But because of the marital complications that he did not approve of, he did not bother to do so as Sasi was unrepentant about what he had done. He was later transferred to a jail in South Odisha. During the discussion in the training hall, no one accused Sasi of toutary. It was not that only the secretaries and presidents of the Committees expressed such opinions. The staff of SVA also voiced similar opinions, and did not see Sasi as a touter. There seemed to be considerable agreement between functionaries of the watershed mission at most levels regarding the fact that Sasi might be anything, but a touter he was not.

This is of importance because of two different reasons. First, the act itself for which he was arrested (that of misappropriation of public money) was not necessarily seen as an act of gross misconduct, but the purported reason for committing those acts, that of a second family that he had to support, and his abandonment of his first wife received the most amount of disapproval. This is not to say that people approved of the misappropriation; but the cultural form that critique took was to present it as a question arising out of failing to do one's duty to one's family. Second**,** this fact of outright cheating or misappropriation is not seen as toutary, which corroborates the other narratives that have been offered about toutary; if toutary is not merely fixing or brokering, it is definitely not cheating and 'eating' of the public money, not if it happens in the context of social agents in the context of large economic institutions. It is only when relationships with organs of the government are concerned, then the stories surrounding toutary begin to be told. Thus, as stories, *toutary gapa* (stories about toutary)

occupy the space in which governmental organisations, practices, and narratives are dominant and interact with village society.

The next part of this sub-section argues with ethnographic material that if toutary is not mere misappropriation, it cannot also be read off as corruption. Similar practices that were seen by villagers as corruption when undertaken by higher-up officials were read off as toutary when practised by the lowest-level project staff or villagers in the context of project activities.

The strange case of son-in-law seeds

Toutary is also used as a justification (along with 'politics'—the word being used in the original Odia) for the not completely satisfactory impact of the project and the inability of the project staff to follow all the processual requirements of the project thoroughly. For example, one of the biggest examples of toutary that was given consistently by the staff of both the GO and the NGO PIAs was the strange case of seed improvement in the project area of WORLP. Seed improvement has been one of the important thrust areas of the DWM, Kalahandi under the then PD. In the first three years of the work of the project, seeds were one of the biggest items of expenditure. Although Committees were supposed to procure seeds on their own from certified seed providers, what this meant in practice was that the PIA sourced the seeds and gave it to the individual Committees to distribute. It was the duty of the PIA-level staff to do the follow-up and make sure that all the other ancillary activities for increased production took place. The thrust was on garden crops such as vegetables and new cash crops such as sunflower, although some cereals seeds such as wheat were also distributed.

Invariably (apart from a stray case here and there) all the cereal crops, especially wheat, were consumed by the villagers and the other seeds were sold. The seeds were sold because the seeds were provided at 50 per cent subsidy. For example, sunflower seeds were provided at a cost of Rs 450 per packet whereas the going rate in the market was around Rs 900. Therefore, anyone who got a couple of packets, more often than not,

took the packets to some relative's place and sold them for a neat profit of around Rs 1000 leading villagers to christen sunflower seeds as 'juāin manji' (literally translated the expression means "son-in-law seeds")!

But such 'creativity' is not the hallmark of peasants only. The very decision to push for new crops and improved seeds has its root in the fact that the officer in charge of selling seeds in the department of agriculture in the district was a friend of a certain highly placed official in the district watershed mission. The push for selling seeds was as much an initiative to help increase farm productivity in the district as it was to help out a friend in need. Whereas GO PIAs made light of such compulsions (perhaps for the simple reason of being used to them), this push to buy seeds from a specific provider riled the NGO PIAs. One of the three NGO PIAs for WORLP in Kalahandi was especially unhappy with this decision because it had its own seed production unit, and it wanted to buy seeds from this unit and not from the agriculture department. Thus, it is not that villagers attempted to use the project structures for their own ends; senior government officials at the district levels and NGO PIAs also were complicit in such processes.

This creative translation of a governmental fiat to 'grow more food' into 'get more money' was invariably seen as toutary and not as 'corruption'. Corruption is seen as inhering higher up in the government departments/systems, and not as something that people/project beneficiaries/peasants indulge in, although the nature of the actions might be similar. So toutary can be seen as that domain of practice that comes into being only as a result of interactions with the state or interventions by the state. The narratives surrounding corruption work at a level which is located at a remove from the everyday practices of the villagers. 'Corrupt' practices, as already mentioned, inhere inside the government organisations. Therefore, corruption is something that the villagers have to deal with as being external to village society and this seems to be a localised space inside the state system. In contrast, one can, perhaps with some limitations, describe toutary (both as narrative and as a social domain) as the way in which the everyday reasserts itself in a tactical sense.

The next sub-section continues with the style of exposition of the previous ones. It provides ethnographic evidence to argue that although some touters might be involved in some acts of politicking, their actions and perceptions cannot be completely reduced to the domain of politics. The following sub-section tries to argue that although many touters do sometimes work as foot soldiers of political parties and are involved in local political processes, toutary as a domain of activity cannot be completely subsumed within politics. The ensuing sub-section provides some ethnographic evidence behind this assertion.

Toutary and politics

I am sitting in a review meeting masquerading as a training programme for all the 'point persons'[54] of the DWM, Kalahandi, in Bhawanipatna. The 'training' is being conducted in a musty training room belonging to the Panchayati Raj department in the heart of the town, and not in the PD office that is situated at the outskirts of the city proper. The PD office is too small to accommodate all the expected participants. It's a pleasant February forenoon, and the staff drops into the office in ones and twos. The training starts after a reasonable number have arrived. After the issue of attendance has been taken care of, the question of coverage of households under the SHGs comes up. The coverage of households in the project villages under SHGs has become an important goal for the watershed-plus component of the various projects in general and WORLP in particular. One of the point persons gets up and says, "Sir, in my villages there is already 65 per cent coverage, so getting 80 per cent or 100 per cent coverage will not be a problem. But people are asking what we will get out of becoming members of SHGs. I have already got most of the projected revolving funds money. I might get a lakh or two more at the most. If I promise money to all of them I'll most probably land up in trouble as I won't be able to give loans to all of them."

[54] A point person is a staff of the project, who has been given the overall supervisory charge over one or more microwatershed development committees. The average number of villages per point person is generally around two, with some point persons having to manage a much larger number sometimes. For any cheque of a committee to be cleared it needs the signature of the officer acting as the PIA and the point person. All 'point persons' are staff of the Watershed Mission, but all staff of the watershed mission are not 'point persons'. If a staff has been recently hired or has fallen out of favour of the project director, then she is generally divested of the responsibilities of being a point person.

Then the APD chairing the programme tells him, "Why don't you get all the money that you have loaned the older groups back? After all, this is supposed to be a revolving fund!" To this the point person replied, "Sir even I know it's supposed to be a revolving fund. But you know how things operate in the field. There is a lot of political interference ['political interference' used in the original Odia]. Last month I went into an overdrive for collecting the amount loaned to the SHGs, and I had planned a campaign for recovery of the SHG loans. But the day before we were supposed to go house-to-house (I had also let people know that if they do not return money on that day cases will be filed against them) in a group to put pressure on people to give the money back, I had the block chairman calling me and virtually threatening me politely to stop the campaign. He asked me whether I had given my father's money to the groups or paid from my own pocket. In the face of this kind of politics please tell me what I can do. The PD had asked me to call him in case of any problem. I called him and told him everything. But he just gave me assurances. So I had to stop the campaign. What else could I have done sir?"

This is one example illustrating the fact that the PIA-level project staff would not talk about 'corruption' or its Odia equivalents (khāeebā or literally 'eating' and herpher or misappropriation) while describing such phenomena. They would describe it primarily in terms of politics. Instead of 'the social' it is 'politics' that is talked about as the site of resistance for functioning of WORLP by the PIA-level staff if this resistance is coming from a location outside the immediate project site such as the block chairperson's office or from the MLA or the local MP. When this possibility of interference in the work comes from a source that is 'localised', say a local Sarpanch or a Panchayat Samiti member, then it is seen as toutary. None of the higher-level functionaries (for example, CBT members) generally talked about toutary unless I asked them about it. They framed their perception in terms of interferences with routine project practices from 'outside' in terms of *politics*.

Thus, as the anecdote from the training programme/meeting detailed in this sub-section shows, the distinctions between toutary and politics stem as much from the kind

of person who acts or does not act in a specific fashion, as it does from the location of this person in the broader socio-political formation. Narratives surrounding toutary seem to be occurring in descriptions belonging to interference from local processes whereas politics seems to be interference coming from non-local processes.

The various sub-sections of the preceding section have detailed narratives surrounding toutary to argue that although toutary as a domain of perception and social action overlaps with certain other domains such as rājaniti, corruption, and politics, it is not reducible to any one of them. Toutary is not reducible to corruption because corruption seems to inhere inside the state with respect to older modes of state-fabrication whereas toutary seems to be located as a domain of intersection between the local state and village society. Similarly both politics and toutary are seen as forces that affect what are seen as normal modes of functioning of WORLP by the project staff. But toutary seems to stem from the local and the everyday where as political interference is seen as stemming from non-local political actors and processes. Rājaniti is seen as a more or less amoral domain of social action whereas toutary carries a connotation of being unethical. Similarly, although touters do some amount of brokering for the state and villagers, they are not merely brokers or touts because touters do not merely provide a service, but also are closely imbricated in framing the perceptions and practices of the people related to the state.

Of touts and touters

On the face of it the word ‘touter’, although a legitimate Odia word of frequent usage, is derived from the English word ‘tout’. But a touter is more than a fixer or a broker. To mistake a touter for a broker is to mistake an auto-rickshaw for a motorcycle on three wheels. A touter is not merely a social agent with specific social functions in the newly emerging sites and nodes of state-fabrication. The social practices that he embodies and the identities that he engenders constitute a social domain—that of toutary. The following anecdote tries to explicate this affirmation.

It was a cold winter morning and Nilambar (a WDT member in the government PIA) and I were on our way to a WORLP village for work on his motorbike. All of a sudden it started raining and we had to stop in a small tea shop and we started chatting. I asked him questions about toutary and he offered me a 'hypothetical example' of a 'typical touter'. He was a circumspect man and did not want to run the risk of labeling someone as a touter. Instead of offering me a specific example of a specific touter, he started explaining and explicating what he understood by a touter—who counts as one and who does not.

By the way of explanation he offered me the supposedly hypothetical example of a high school dropout who is a touter in his own village. This person had a few acres of ancestral agricultural land, but he was lazy and, therefore, did not want to take up farming (this is one characteristic that seems to be common to most touters; they are all 'lazy'). He had given out his land for cultivation to a tenant and, therefore, had a lot of free time on his hands. This time, Nilambar said, the dropout utilises for toutary.

On asking what would count as toutary, I was told, "See sir, touters do many things. It is very difficult to give a list no? For example this Santosh Sahu in our village has a lot of connection in the education department. How he developed his connections no one knows, but some say that when he was doing his junior college in Bhawanipatna one of his closest friends was the son of an SI (school inspector) and he picked up most of his contacts through him.[55] The last year he made at least Rs 27,000 during the time of the matriculation examination. He collected Rs 3000 each from 10 parents and told them that he'll try and ensure that each of their children got at least a second division in the examinations.

Now only three of them got second division, six passed in third division and one failed. After repeated appeals and threats by the father of the child who failed, he

[55] This was another motif that went on repeating itself: *sikhyā* in its pedagogic form and intent, therefore, did not merely turn one into a touter; its modern formal institutions such as the school/the junior college/the college/and the ITI are also seen as sites par excellence for developing networks and skills necessary for a 'career' in toutary.

returned around Rs 2000 and still owes him around Rs 1000. To the parents of the six children who got third division he said that the kids were about to fail, but because of him they passed with a third division. The parents had no way of figuring out the veracity of the remarks of Santosh, and therefore did not argue with him." But in a school with a high rate of failure this was good showing indeed.

As this vignette shows, touters, in fact, do a few things that brokers do as well.[56] But the domain of toutary is not reducible to merely 'fixing' in the sense there are no fixed rates that one pays to get a service. It is not the poorest of the poor who always take the help of the touters to get their work done. For example, Bhimā, a Kondh landless labourer, was one of the poorest people in Mahulpani. He was a childless widower, and did not even have a goat to his name. But he got 25 kg of rice every month for Rs 2 per kg under a scheme of the government of Odisha. He did not have bārdhakya bhātā or old age pension to his name, and has generally been pestering (in front of me) the local member of the village council to get the bhātā done in his name. He had been pestering this person for the last year or so without avail. This ward member is active in village and block level politics, but I had never heard anyone refer to him as a touter.

One of his Bhimā's neighbours called Sukhi, of his own *jamā* (clan), was a touter (by popular consensus) and reputedly had many contacts in the local administration. On asking him why did he not approach Sukhi for getting his bhātā done he said, "Muin ta sukhbāsi lok āgyān. Touter sāthe mor ki kām achhe kahun? Member ke dhari hele hebā nahele nāhin." [I am a destitute sir! What do I have to do with a touter? If the member is able to do it, then it is ok, otherwise I'll let it be.] In fact, it is the slightly better off people who have some knowledge of how the government works tended to use the 'services' of the touters. Those having lesser contacts with the formal economy and the state also tend to have less to do with touters and more to do with local politicians, although a water-tight compartamentalisation cannot be posited.

[56] For the idea of brokerage, refer to Corbridge and Kumar 2002, Gupta 2005, Simon 2009.

This discussion surrounding touts and touters has to be seen in the context of a growing body of literature on middlemen in rural areas (Ram Reddy and Haragopal 1985; Manor 2000; Inbanathan and Gopalappa 2002; Simon 2009; Daftary 2010). One of the first descriptions of the mediators between the state and the people was given by Ram Reddy and Haragopal (1985) in which they describe them by the vernacular term *pyraveekar* or as someone who follows up work for people in the governmental setting. But these commentators see these mediators as having roots in a feudal past and as operating at regional, national and international levels. They also see these social agents principally not as mediators between people and an intrusive developmental state but as mediators between local power structures and supra-local political processes.

In contrast to such a formulation this chapter argues that these middlemen mediate between state and the people and are in fact a product of the intrusion of the state into village society. They also fulfill a predominantly local role, and this role is not always one of 'political mediation'. In arguing so, this thesis locates itself in an emergent body of work that sees these intermediaries as not mere brokers but as mediators (Simon 2009).

The 'nature' of the domain of toutary

The previous section tried to give an account of the domain of toutary by arguing that it cannot be subsumed within other parallel domains of sociality. The present section tries to understand toutary as a domain and touters as social agents by arguing analogically. The way people talk about touters as social agents and toutary as a domain seems to be analogous to the way they talk about devis, devtās and the domains occupied by them. The attitudes of villagers towards jhākars[57] and the touters, and the perceptions of the people with them point at an important characteristic of both these groups of people: they act as go-betweens across social domains.

[57] A jhākar is a traditional mediator between the devtās and men/women or between the domain of the devtās and the domain of human sociality and has important privileges during rituals in festivals such as dasarā and chaitra purnimā. He is a man and derives his legitimacy from his role as a mediator. But he is definitely not held in any kind of awe.

Devtās, bhagwāns and jhākars and touters: arguing through analogy

In the district of Kalahandi there has been a growth in the *pujā*[58] of pan-Indian and pan-regional deities called as *bhagwān*s as opposed to the local deities referred to as devtās. This seemed to cut across the experience of all the major *jāti* groups inhabiting the region. Devtās (which are either deities peculiar to the jāti group or are family deities or *kul* devtās) are generally seen as slowly having lost their efficacy to grant benedictions/benefits, and as having become more hidebound and difficult to trust over a period of time. They are seen as more erratic and whimsical, whereas the more pan-Indian/regionally important deities such as Shiva or Jagannātha are seen as being much more benign. One dominant way of seeing these shifts has been that of sanskritisation in terms of understanding cultural shifts (Srinivas 1956). This section argues that one can link this shift in the relative importance of the devis and devtās to the way people perceive the state through the narratives surrounding toutary. When telling stories about the decrease in the efficacy of the devtās, villagers told that it is due to the increase in toutary. The first story that I heard about the decreasing efficacy of the devtās will perhaps be instructive here.

I was eating dinner at the place of Mr. Surjya Padhan, a Committee member in the village of Mahulpani and a successful peasant with a medium-sized landholding belonging to the locally numerous and dominant jāti of Kulthās. He was describing a marriage and told me that Kulthās of their village do not worship any devtās apart from token gifts to the Kondh devtās that are village deities by the virtue of the fact that this is a village with a Kondh gauntia. They also send gifts to the village mother-goddess during marriage ceremonies. I was told that the Kulthās of this clan do not worship devtās any longer, and in their homes only bhagwāns are worshipped. This happened when they were small children during the time of their father. This was the period immediately after independence. Their father was a locally important big man, and was a friend of the gauntia of the village. He gave land to the village for setting up of the village school, and was involved in what Mr. Padhan terms as social reform. He apparently ran into trouble

[58] Pujā is ritualised devotion offered to deities by devotees.

with a couple of devtās. Due to inappropriate propitiation of a devi during a pujā, blood reportedly started appearing every morning in the outer courtyard of his home. After consulting a local medicine man, this devi and another devtā were subdued, and then he banned the pujā of the devtās in his jamā or lineage and the pujā of bhagwāns started in earnest.

A few of the other stories I heard from people belonging to other caste groups also followed a similar narrative structure. People also continuously talked about the lessening efficacy of the devis and devtās. They were able to set a precise time period since which the devtās started disappearing and/or losing their efficacy. This is said to start from the time "*sheeklee gaonre bulilā*" [chains started moving in the village] or the time since when chains used for land measurement were used for settling land in the district. Kalahandi is an erstwhile princely state, and large parts of the land of the state were not settled. This process started in the postindependence period only after the integration of the state of Kalahandi into India. Because iron is supposed to act as a constraint for devtās as a category of beings, these narratives offered, they could not move around any longer. As an effect of being rooted to one place, they started losing their efficacy and began losing their effectiveness to intervene in human matters. But it is not that such narratives of change are easily accepted or that there are no disputes surrounding such a process of change. Let me narrate an anecdote.

It was a late winter evening and four villagers and I were sitting in the small room in Arjun's home in the village of Kusumpadar. I had just finished my dinner and the rest of them too had assembled for their post-dinner convivial smoking of tobacco. One of the men called Nala and referred to as *bhinei* or brother-in-law was the maternal uncle of Arjun and was visiting for a marriage. Arjun's father and two of his paternal uncles from the extended jamā in the hamlet were also present. A conversation began about the impending marriage, changes in marriage rituals, and the amount of money being spent these days on marriages. Then the conversation shifted to the amount of money floating around these days, and the increasing toutary in village society. Bhinei, who was an old man of around 75, extremely articulate, with a keen grasp of scriptures in Odia started

saying that one of the *lakhyana*[59] of the increased toutary everywhere was the decrease in the efficacy of the devtās. One of his brothers-in-law started questioning this reading and said, "Bhinei tume thik kathā nāin kahebā. Devtā māne e pate achhan āru tānkara power [originally in Odia] epate achhe." [Brother-in-law, you are not telling the right thing; devtās are still around, and their 'power' still remains.]

To this the bhinei replied "If you say something you must see how true that is for everyone and then only say it, right? The devtās you worship might still be around, but that does not mean, generally speaking, their strength has not diminished. What about the case of our Mā Mangla?[60] Till around 10–15 years back when your father's grandmother was alive she used to fry *kākerā*s[61] with her bare hands when anything inappropriate was done, and the devi used to descend into her body. Does that happen now?" To this the others gave shamefaced smiles and did not reply at all. Then the bhinei rhetorically asked, "Why has this happened? This is because people do not have faith any longer due to the increase of toutary in the villages. Only blindly repeating that devtās are still around is not going to help much."

The villager who had raised the objections started to talk about the experiences of the devi that he has the most experience of (that of Kālikeswari[62]). He said that he carried the devi with him, and she protected him against all form of trouble. He gave the example of an incident. A farmer from a neighbouring village had borrowed a sum of Rs 10,000 from him some time back. He went on delaying repayment. One day finally he felt that he had enough and barged into the debtor's village to get his money back after ensuring that the latter was in fact at his home. The debtor apparently gave the money back within three hours of him reaching this village, even though he had been dillydallying for the last three years. The devi apparently started whipping the debtor, and punished him for his transgression. This is what made the latter pay back the money in a tearing hurry. After having narrated this incident he also reluctantly agreed to the fact that all said and

[59] 'Lakhyana' can be literally translated into English as a symptom.
[60] Manglā is a female deity and is one of the two principal deities of the Sundhi jāti that these four men belonged to.
[61] A fried savoury made out of broken wheat and sugar.
[62] Apart from Manglā, Kālikeswari is the most important goddess of this jāti.

done the strength of the devis and devtās had decreased, and most probably this was due to the increasing toutary in the villages.

Not only do villagers see parallels between the ways in which devis and devtās have started losing their efficacy and the ways in which toutary has increased over the last few decades, but they also make the connection between the devis and devtās losing their efficacy and the increased toutary. In many ways a touter is a priest who propitiates the 'deity of the state', and the attitude of people towards touters mimics the attitude they have towards jhākars. For example, the jhākar in Mahulpani is, more often than not, seen by villagers as mildly disreputable due to the fact that he loves his bottle of mahuā[63] a little too much. After I shifted into the village he told me that I should conduct a pujā for Dharni.[64] I readily agreed and gave him Rs 50 to buy the required material for the pujā. I gave him the money in early afternoon. The pujā was supposed to take place in early evening. But he was nowhere to be found. Next day when I came across him while going for my bath in the hamlet's tank I caught a fleeting glance and got a sheepish grin. Later I found out that he had blown up all the money that he got from me for the Dharni pujā on mahuā.

While returning from the bath I was accosted by another Kondh man who asked me rhetorically, 'Āgyān did you manage to get your pujā done?" [Sir did you manage to get your pujā done?] I smiled and said, "No." He said, "Bloody drunkard! The jhākar does nothing if you give him the money in advance. He blows it all up on mahuā. Devi, devtānka sange kārabāra kale āru kān hebā? [What else will happen if one consorts with devis and devtās?]" This man was not only making the point that the jhākar was a dissolute person, but the cause for dissolution was posited as having to deal with a domain of sociality that is not 'normal', in this case the non-human one populated by devis and devtās.

[63] Locally made alcohol brewed from mahuā flowers, of which both humans and devtās are fond of.
[64] Dharni is the devi of fertility and general well-being, and is an important devi of the Kondhs of Kalahandi.

‘In those days there was not so much government’: or stories of toutary as critique of emergent modes of state-fabrication

In many ways toutary is seen as being linked to a domain of social practice that is antagonistic to the older logic of ‘mānya’[65] and ‘bhay’[66] that governed social action and political practice earlier. Manua, an elderly teli man around 75 years, had this to say when asked about changes in the way the government worked, “In those days people thought about each other because there was so little money. Congress and Gandhi spoiled everything. There was mānya and bhay then, people used to respect the elderly, and government officials. We used to hide if a police constable came to the village. Now people see a police inspector and roll their moustaches a notch higher and walk. It is not that there was no toutary when we were young. But it was not this bad.”

The stories that people in the field tell to each other surrounding toutary can be read as an ethical critique of development. One of the key tropes that marks those days is that of *bhok*[67] and bhay**.** People consistently talk about stories of how most people in the village went hungry in ‘those days’ and how they used to be a lot of bhay around; fear of devtās, fear of outsiders, fear of officials of the princely state of Kalahandi, and fear of the police. But when someone would be narrating the story of material progress (of improved roads, improved farm productivity, the passing away of persistent hunger, etc), suddenly others would start telling me stories about increased toutary and will narrate particular examples about it. It is as if everyone wanted to partake of the fruits of improved material existence of ‘these days’ and were yet unable to do so without having offered a critique of toutary that seems to mark the passing of developmental time.

These stories are told in terms of lack/absence of the government, not merely of changing tropes and perceptions of governance. One statement that many people made

[65] In Odia the word ‘mānya’ means respectable. During fieldwork it was used primarily as a verb in the context of descriptions offered where the older villagers would see the practice of showing respect to the elders at home and the village and towards government officials and the state as decreasing over a period of time.
[66] ‘Bhay’ literally means fear; but in the context of fieldwork this word carried the additional meaning of deference.
[67] Bhok is an Odia word that means hunger.

was "*Sete bele ete besi sarakāra nathilā*" (which when translated literally into English from Odia will read as 'in those days there was not so much government'). The memories that the older people have of 'those days' are of *sāsan* which can be literally translated as discipline or disciplining by coercion. Thus, 'development' is not merely seen in material terms. By a large number of people see it as essentially a moral project and offer an ethical critique in the form of the stories surrounding toutary.

The ambivalence of most villagers towards devis and devtās is analogous to the way in which they talk about the extension of the government into their lives. When I asked the villagers this question, "How was politics/administration when you were younger?", most of them belonging to the older generation invariably replied, "Se samayare sāsana bahuta kadā thilā." [The discipline was very 'hard'/'strong' those days.] They fault the contemporary administrative system for being *dhilā* or loose**.** The criticism of the present state as dhilā also carries within itself the idea that the state now incorporates the social into it in a fundamental fashion.

In this context, the watershed project assumes salience. A lot of people concurred that no other 'department' had ever given so many things to so many people. This is credited with raising the level of toutary prevalent in the village**.** To explicate matters further let me provide some ethnographic evidence. It was a cold winter evening and I had just been sitting around and waiting for a Committee member, Sagar Mājhi, to arrive. He was a marginal farmer owning around 2 acres of land. He was also a member of the hamlet's bhajan[68] group. That is how we became close. We would often sing together in a local *eksiā*[69] ceremony or for a Trināth pujā.[70] That day I had been called for a session of bhajan practice. He arrived a little late, and after exchanging the initial pleasantries he sat down and we started talking while waiting for other members of the group to arrive. I asked him, "A lot of people seem to be saying that toutary has increased because of this watershed project. What do you think?" He became a little animated and said, "Dekhun

[68] Devotional songs written in praise of deities.
[69] Ceremony to mark the 21st day of the birth of a child.
[70] A popular ceremony in which the the deity Trināth, supposedly the amalgamation of the three Hindu deities of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva is propitiated.

āgyān, jene tankā rahebā, jene sarkāri kathā rahebā sene toutary rahebā ekā rahebā. Nāin rahi kari upāya ta nāhine." [See sir, wherever there is money, wherever there are matters pertaining to the government, toutary will be there; it cannot be escaped.] It cannot be said that this watershed has specifically increased toutary. But it must be said that there is a lot more toutary now than used to be say five years back" [the watershed project had started in the village roughly around four years back]. Since he was a member of the local microwatershed development committee, he agreed to the perceived role of the watershed project in increasing toutary in the village, albeit in a shamefaced manner.

When I did not say anything, he continued, "See, nearly 100 people have been given grants. Now you may go and check the actual number from Sarat[71]. I don't have it on my fingertips. But out of the 100 who were given goats or were supported for other business ventures, hardly 10 or 15 must have survived. Mostly people bought goats and now most of them are gone. Most people would tell you that the goats died because of disease. But that is not the only reason. The story is that toutary has entered the heart of most people—'samastankar manre toutary pasichhe'. A large number of people bought goats, sold them off and told the watershed that they died. I was given some money, Rs 4000 to be exact, and I added Rs 3000 to that sum and bought a pair of bullocks with it instead of buying goats. Over the last three years they have stood me in good stead. I used to spend around a Rs 1000 on renting bullocks every year to plough my 2 acres of land. I have been saved of that expenditure. I have also earned around Rs 3000 over the last three years renting out my bullocks when I do not need them. Now they are worth at least Rs 14,000–15,000. But this has involved hard work. The problem is that in this *kaliyug*[72] no one wants to work hard. Everyone not only wants the government to feed them, but also expects the government to digest the food for them. That is the problem. People have become touters because of the government, not because of this project only." This conversation shows that Sagar reads a trend of increasing toutary in the area/village. But he does not necessarily attribute it to the watershed project per se; he attributes it to

[71] The secretary of the Committee of the village.
[72] The age of Kali; out of the fourfold Hindu division of time, this is the last age in a cosmic cycle. This is also the age we are living in now.

the very gestalt of the age that we inhabit, as well to the general logic of the interface of the village society with the state.

This is not to say that this increase of toutary and the increasing interpenetration of the government in village society are seen as something inherently negative by everyone. Most people agree that hunger has decreased over the last 20 years or so, and that things are 'easier' now. One constant motif is the ease of communication due to the spread of mobile phones. Growth of new communication technologies, ranging from old ones such tarred roads to new ones such as mobile phones, are spoken of in mostly approving tones. But as already mentioned, these stories of 'progress' would invariably be interrupted, often by the same person, by some shamefaced narrative about ethical degeneration, and how things have taken a turn for the worse in terms of mānya and bhaya. This is seen as a direct result of increasing state intervention, and the consequent increase in toutary in the villages. There have been other accounts of the ambiguous nature of such processes of change, for example, Pinney (1999) provides an account of how discourses of kaliyug frame the changes surrounding the processes of industrialisation in and around a small town in Madhya Pradesh in India.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that in Kalahandi the perceptions and practices related to the state, including those associated with state-fabrication in the mission mode as exemplified in projects such as WORLP is framed through toutary. Toutary is a localised, region-bound, vernacular domain of sociality that has emerged out of the penetration by the state of village society, which has intensified under the new modes of state-fabrication. It is narratives surrounding toutary that dominantly frame the perceptions of the state by people in Kalahandi, and the latter is not exhausted by the narratives surrounding politics and corruption.

This chapter has also shown that it is not always necessary to introduce new conceptual categories such as political society or moral society to be able to provide

descriptions of state–society relationships with respect to the emergent mission mode of state-fabrication. Vernacular categories such as toutary can help us with such descriptions as well. The popular narratives surrounding toutary as a domain and touters as social agents also have an analogical resonance with people's perceptions and practices related to other domains of sociality such as that associated with the local deities.

Toutary does not merely frame people's perceptions and actions related to the state and its agents. Narratives surrounding it provide a space for an ethical critique of the expansion of the developmental state. Narratives of corruption are attempts at restoring the idea of normative state practice. But stories of toutary rupture these normative narratives by positing a vernacular domain of ethical critique, if not of ethical practice. Thus, this discussion surrounding toutary has enabled to undertake a cartographic exercise of state–society interactions that go beyond the standard formulations of corruption and/or state-failure.

Chapter VII
Conclusion

Impasse in development studies: from politics to the state

This thesis has located itself within the field of discourse of development studies, and within this field of interdisciplinary social sciences, at a specific conjuncture. The field of development, as already mentioned in the introduction, is passing through a curious impasse; there are critiques, especially of the postdevelopment variety that seem to block the flow of this discourse by talking about alternatives to development rather than alternatives for development, thereby denying this discourse its central concern (Agrawal 1996; Rapley 2004). This is not new of course; obituaries of development and development studies have been written starting from the later half of the 1980s. By popular diagnosis, development studies and development theory has been perpetually on the death bed for more than two decades and, therefore by now, what is in question is not the status of health/illness of the field but rather of these diagnoses themselves (Schuurman 2000; Corbridge 2007). One of the first challenges that were mounted against the academic domain of development (against development economics and not 'development studies' per se) was by the resurgence of neoclassical economic in the 1980s (Leys 2005).

But the postdevelopment thesis advocates a much more radical claim. It argues that the goals of human welfare and the effects of development are not compatible, and following from this claim argues for a complete disengagement from the discourse of development. It points in the direction of alternatives to development rather than alternatives for development. This postdevelopment turn in development studies is reflective of a broader turn in the social sciences over the last three decades or so. In the specific disciplinary case of development studies, borrowings from the work of the poststructuralist scholar Foucault has been crucial (Agrawal 1996). Conceptualisations of disciplinary power and discourse have been borrowed from Foucault to understand development as a discourse that extends bureaucratic state power by extending its reach

and disciplining populations. A critical part of the case against development that the postdevelopment scholars scholars build has been that development as a discourse removes, or at least tries to remove with some success, domains and questions that should be a matter of political contestation into the 'technocratic' domain of development. Some scholars suggest that the postdevelopment critique is an empty critique as it does not provide us with either a conceptual or a programmatic map to extricate ourselves out of the problem that such a position identifies (Corbridge 1998).

As summarised in Chapter I, many possible points of departure have been suggested out of such a conjuncture. These range from business-as-usual propositions to just ethnographic detailing to figure out 'how things work'. Other scholars have argued for either a deeper engagement with Foucault or for borrowing from other strands of poststructuralist scholarship such as these exemplified by the works of Deluze and Guttari, and Lacan. In some sense, this thesis is an attempt to suggest a point of departure from the postdevelopment impasse.

The state continues to be the development actor par excellence despite the competing yet complementary claims of neoliberal globalisation and postdevelopment localisation. Therefore, an understanding of the operations of the everyday state still remains relevant. Both Gramscian borrowings, and the borrowing and usage of Foucauldian conceptualisations of discourse and disciplinary/bio-power to understand development do not adequately grapple with the state; in the first, the state remains an epiphenomenon, while in the second, it comes across as a 'residue' of the operations of disciplinary power. In effect both these approaches deny a 'substantive reality' to the state (Jessop 2001).

The promise of ethnography: studying the everyday state

One needs to shift the focus from politics to the state, and give the state the status of a substantive entity. In the context of the field of development studies, this then is the programmatic departure that this thesis has offered; a shift of focus from politics to the

state. One aspect of such a refocusing is to stop elaborating narratives of state-formation to narratives of, what this researcher has termed as, state-fabrication. This shift brings into focus two interrelated moves. First, while arguing for a refocusing on the state, it makes sure that one does not fall into the trap of reifying it. Second, it brings into a sharper focus the contingent and everyday ways in which the state is fabricated. In this context, the thesis, therefore, tries to intervene by providing a map of the morphings of the developmental state within the register of the everyday.

The thesis has argued for rethinking politics in India anew by exploring the term as used and articulated in everyday practice, and by seeing how it is made comprehensible outside the academe. Instead of attempting a 'theoretical' resolution, the thesis tries to address this by detailing an empirical case that is housed within a specific geography and within a specific set of perceptions and actions related to the state. The geography is that of Kalahandi, a district in the South-Western corner of Odisha. As already detailed in Chapter III, this district has acquired the force of a graphic metaphor for hunger and deprivation; Kalahandi is the Somalia of India. Starting from the mid-1980s, stories of starvation deaths and distress sell of children have been regularly reported from the district with an attendant growth of developmental interventions.

Parallel to this process, there has been a growth of political and dalit poetry in Odia with 3 key poets being from the undivided district of Kalahandi. The framing of Kalahandi as a geography of hunger (both in academic and policy literature) sees the relationship between development and politics as an inverse/negative one and ignores the changing forms of governmental action. This parallels readings of what are seen as caste-based discrimination as the basis of reworking the 'politics of literature' in the Odia language by treating politics as a mere theme. This relative neglect of forms, of the state in the case of readings of politics of development, and the domestication of politics as a mere theme of poetic composition (and the naturalisation of certain high-modernist poetic forms) are analogically similar processes that occlude our understanding of everyday practices.

Drawing upon ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the site of the governmental project, WORLP, the thesis has shown that ethnographies of the everyday state can provide us with a handle to have a formal understanding of the state in geographies such as Kalahandi. In this thesis this ethnographic approach has a specific agenda, and it goes off on a specific theoretical bend. It tries to build a counter-case to certain dominant narratives surrounding the state in India. Chapter I pointed out that starting from the mid-1980s, with the growing influence of the work of scholars such as Partha Chatterjee and Sudipta Kaviraj, the subject of analysis changed from an earlier focus on nation building to the fragmentation of the national project. The work of these scholars has provided the dominant theoretical strand of looking at the Indian state, and the thesis identified as the 'passive revolution thesis'. Borrowing from the idea of historic block from Gramsci, the theorists of this school argue that the postcolonial Indian nation-state's inability to undertake a complete transformation of Indian society led by the bourgeois can be characterised as passive revolution. This school provides a class-coalitional model to understand politics and the state in India. The recent political society formulation is an important contemporary extension of this theoretical strand.

Understanding the everyday state: interrogating political society

Theoretically the most sophisticated account of processes of morphings of the state, and the attendant processes of multiplication of technologies of governmentality in the postcolony has been those surrounding political society. In this formulation, Chatterjee argues that the domain of negotiation and claim-making with the state that the various subaltern social groups engage with maps out on the terrain of political society, the domain of civil society being the preserve of rights-bearing 'citizens'. This is the latest variation of the passive revolution thesis, albeit reworked inside the subaltern turn in which the erstwhile subalterns get theoretically relocated as 'population groups' (Chatterjee 2004).

Chapter II argued that there have been two distinct modes of state-fabrication in the postcolonial period. The first mode this thesis called the departmental mode of state-

fabrication. This mode was more or less in continuation with colonial processes of fabricating the state with some important modifications introduced with the process of decolonisation and the beginning of the workings of parliamentary democracy. This mode was characterised by symbolic logistics of state-fabrication in which the state acted at a distance from people, especially from village society. The dominant kind of technology used in this logistics of state-fabrication was the scientific one, of which big dams are a classical example. One of the key modes of its operation was, therefore, by making itself visible through interventions such as big dams, IITs and the various CSIR laboratories. Thus, the principal way in which 'the state' was made available to people was through a regime of visibility.

By the 1980s a new mode of state-fabrication started emerging. This processes of transformation can be located in what this thesis has called the long 1980s. This new mode started accreting over the extant symbolic mode. The state no longer merely acted at a distance; it started insinuating itself into the very interstices of society by reaching out to new marginal spaces including new sectors, hitherto unreached rural areas and communities. This was achieved through various social technologies such as microwatershed development committees and self-help groups. Through various organisational morphings and institutional innovations the state started 'seeping through'. This 'seepage' of the state is perhaps best understood as operating through, what this thesis has termed, the mission mode of state-fabrication.

This new mode of state-fabrication has been attempted to be explained by being seen as emerging from the synergistic dynamic under conditions of passive revolution of peasant articulations against corporate capital and claim-making on the state, one the one hand, and the need and intent of the ruling classes to perpetuate their rule by containing 'dangerous classes' through newer strategies of governmental action, on the other (Chatterjee 2008). What this thesis has argued against is the conflation of the political and the state. It has shown that (a) there is the possibility of state-fabrication by tactics (and not strategies) of government-making that do not necessarily arise out of an imperative of containment; (b) these governmental tactics are continuously challenged

and sometimes subverted by tactics of all kinds of social actors; and (c) these tactics used by non-state actors are not necessarily over-determined by governmental tactics.

Thus, state-fabrication is being transformed in rural areas, but it is not necessarily happening through a strategy of containment. The actions of rural social actors, especially peasants, need not be read as being involved in a kind of politics that is just another name for claim-making upon the state. The narrative offered here of the seepage of the state also differs from the reading offered by Emma Tarlo (1995) in her analysis of the response of 'victims' of the sterilisation drive in a resettlement colony in Delhi. She shows the seeping of the state into the everyday as some exceptional circumstance in which through a process of incentivisation citizens participated in an originally coercive project of forced sterilisation. The charge of this thesis has been that such seeping has become routine through a morphing of the state, especially in the domain of development; such seepage no longer remains the exception.

As mentioned earlier, the earlier mode state-fabrication and the regime associated with it were definitely not supplanted through this new mode. The earlier mode is operational as well. The state continues to try and make itself visible, and also continues to act at a distance. But it increasingly tries to be available to people through attempts at facilitating participation and decentralisation. Thus, if one were to argue through a sensory metaphor, then one can say that earlier the state could be seen, and now it can be both seen and felt.

The newly emergent mode of state-fabrication took a specific form in India over the last 25 years. Starting with the six technology missions in the mid-1980s, the dominant institutional mode through which state-fabrication has started taking place is through missions. As discussed in Chapter III, for almost every sector a mission has been started; examples of these are the National Rural Health Mission for the health sector, and the various state Watershed Development Missions for watershed development. Following the methodological and theoretical approach laid down in Chapters I and II,

this thesis went on to provide an account of the contingent and situated nature of state-fabrication on the ground. This point needs to be emphasised.

Tactics of state-fabricating in the mission mode: processes and effects

Through an ethnography of the everyday state, in this case that of an ongoing livelihoods-based, watershed-plus project of the Government of Odisha, this thesis has shown the usage of the governmental developmental tactics by intended beneficiaries and ground-level implementers. While doing so it has pointed out the changing forms of state-fabrication on the ground and the governmental tactics complicit in such changes.

In this context, the thesis identified and described five tactics of state-fabrication that can help in accounting the transformation of the contingent processes of state-fabrication. The first such tactic is that of 'multiplication'; over the last few decades, especially over the last two decades or so, there has been a significant multiplication of the nodes through which the state comes into contact with society. One of the ways in which this has happened is through the growth of the number and types of institutions through which state-fabrication takes place through everyday practice. The second tactic is 'expansion of the body of the state'. This has happened by an increase in the number and type of institutions that fall under the ambit of the state. For example, in WORLP, under the various district watershed missions, increasingly NGOs and similar organisational forms of what are conventionally seen as civil society are brought under the ambit of the state. The third tactic through which these morphings of the state can be understood is that of pluralisation of logics of state operations. Increasingly new logics such as participation and targeting are imbricated in the operations of the state. The fourth tactic is that of provisionalisation; in this context provisionalisation reflects on the increasingly 'fabricated' way in which the state is made available for perceptions. The fifth tactic is that of textualisation and visibilisation. Although the state has always been 'lettered', increasingly in the mission mode there is an overwhelming drive to textualise and visibilise processes of state-fabrication.

Chapters IV and V of the thesis showed that all these five tactics can be seen to congeal into producing one important effect; they make the state available to people in an unprecedented fashion—available for commentary, criticism, abuse and fraternisation, and as a pedagogic site for learning rules of conduct. To elaborate the sensory metaphor a little, it is not merely as if such a mode of state-fabrication merely makes the state and its agents visible up close. What it does, to put it in an inversion of conventional terms, is that it increases the 'reach' of people to reach the state, feel it, touch it, and make it amenable, even if in a limited sense, to the ruses, tactics and practices of everyday life.

The result of the increased 'tactility' of state is the displacement of the state into village society through a rapidly expanding apparatus of development. Power can be a part of the telling of the narratives associated with such a process of displacement, but these stories do not exhaust the explanatory frame. This thesis has tried to provide a possible 'outside' to the explanatory regime set up through the optic of power. Since stories about the state have generally been told with the optic of power in mind, the attempt here has been to provide a small chink in this optic, and show the possibility of narrativising the state without making it exclusively a story of power.

Using detailed ethnographic work this thesis has argued against certain dominant narratives that see contemporary changes in state-fabrication principally through the narrative of extension of bureaucratic state power (Ferguson 1996; Baviskar 2004; Chhotray 2004, 2007). It has argued that the new generation of governance reforms being carried out, and the technologies of state-fabrication that have come to roost over the last three decades are not transparent to read in terms of their intent and workings. It has further shown that these intentions and workings cannot be easily translated on the ground. The effects of such interventions and the deployment of tactics of state-fabrication are not always necessarily depoliticising. One needs to reframe politics and understand how it is understood in other local ethical worlds such that of Kalahandi, as well as cognise other social domains that mediate the between communities and the state.

By borrowing from an approach followed by Michel de Certeau, it was shown that the everyday practice of the intended beneficiaries and implementers of projects and programmes of decentralised development work at cross purposes to the governmental tactics deployed under the quotidian logistics of state-fabrication. This was illustrated with ethnographic engagement with one specific project—WORLP. The project tries to target the poor and the landless through a technocratic logic of partitioning the village population into discrete groups of beneficiaries and then targeting them. But this logic does not completely determine the outcomes. The cultural logic of bhāg, or rightful and reasonable share, seems to have a role in the distribution of benefits of the project. The tactics used by people can be located within a local cultural logic of bhāg or legitimate share. The attempt was not to explain the workings of the cultural logic of these actions by restoring to these actions a moral charge by ethnicising them. Rather the attempt has been to show that as a cultural logic, bhāg cannot be seen within the moral/immoral/amoral grid. It can read as interrupting what is generally read as the working of neoliberal governmentality, and as disrupting transparent translations of technologies of government.

One effect of the mission mode of state-fabrication, and the associated regime of tactility seems to be banalisation of the presence of the state, the institution of processes of surveillance through auditing procedures, and increasing demands of visibilisation. People seem to be using tactics such as lukibā (hiding) to deal with such processes. By exploiting provisions in the project structure that support subaltern groups and through the tactical opportunities available in everyday practice, these groups seem to be able to use the provisions of the project and the shifting contingencies of project practices in ways not foreseen by dominant readings. This is not to argue that such tactics are always ‘successful’ or that ‘local’ cultural logics or registers of conduct are able to completely and permanently subvert the dominant imperatives of governmental tactics. But such an approach helps us to fracture the blinding optic of power by revealing the entanglements of everyday practices, and by opening up new areas for hopefully productive lines of enquiry.

It also helps us to deal with the 'political society' argument from a different vantage point. The political society formulation can be read as presenting the argument that citizens deal with the state as 'legal subjects' and as rights-bearing individuals or through the associational forms of civil society; 'population groups' (as pointed out earlier this term can be seen as standing in for 'subaltern groups') deal with the state as groups, not as individuals. Members of what are seen as population groups in this theory do not always necessarily deal with the state as groups. A large number of times their dealings with the state are amorphous and individualistic. Some framework for locating collective action is central to the political society argument. This thesis has argued that members of what are seen as subaltern groups often deal with the state with actions that need not be fitted into any given framework of collective action. Second, the logic of their actions (as suggested by the political society thesis) are not predicated by the logic of governmental tactics alone; they are a set of tactics sui generis and can be deployed in a variety of social situations for a varied set of reasons .

By doing this, the thesis provides a gloss over the 'weapons of the weak' argument offered by James Scott (1985) by broadly agreeing with him in arguing that subaltern groups do not always engage with state structures as a 'group' or a 'class' even when such categories are available to them for reflection and action. Scott advances a variation of the classic liberal position in the sense that his basic argument is essentially one of social/cultural rationality. He argues that subalterns groups do not always act collectively in dealing with the state for furthering their interests. This is so because the costs for such collective bargaining are high, and the poor and the powerless cannot always pay these costs. Therefore, the subaltern groups take recourse to what Scott called the weapons of the weak, that is, acting individually through tactics such as localised sabotage.[73] What this thesis has shown and argued is that it is not just the subaltern groups that take recourse to these 'weapons of the weak'. These weapons are of much more wider prevalence across social groups, and these are used to deal with both the old and newer forms of state-fabrication.

[73] The researcher owes this insight to the conversations he has had with Prof Vinay Gidwani.

Emergence of the 'social': political society vs toutary

This thesis has shown that the morphing of the state that has been mapped out involves some specific organisational strategies and the emergence of what is termed by people in the field as 'the social'. Key components of this emergence have been the incorporation of other organisational forms such as NGOs into the ambit of the state, and the growth of a wide range of social technologies used by the government. Creation of village-level institutions such as microwatershed development committees and SHGs, and incorporation of NGOs as PIAs are some of the ways in which the state has extended and morphed itself on the ground. This has helped the governmental apparatus to reach into hitherto marginal rural areas and communities. This has had an impact regarding the functioning of the state, and the way it is perceived and acted upon by communities. In particular, one aspect of this morphing of the state was discussed in the thesis—the increasing convergence in the workings and everyday practices of governmental and non-governmental organisations. This convergence has been shown to be in terms of the profile of the staff, and in terms of everyday practices.

The thesis has also shown that instead of re-theorising older categories of political theory such as political society in order to give an account of 'vernacular politics' in the Global South, it might be simpler and might make for better legibility of social practices to understand this emergent 'state in society' through vernacular categories such as toutary. The increasing intersections between state and society are understood not as operations of a rapidly mushrooming bureaucracy but as increasing importance of a certain social phenomenon called toutary, and the increased numbers and importance of social agents called touters. This can be seen as congealing into the social domain of toutary.

Chapter VI provided descriptions of toutary by drawing out usages of four sets of related terms—rājaniti, politics, corruption and toutary. Toutary as a domain of sociality for locating social action and agents is not reducible to the other three domains referred, although it shares characteristics with all the other three. As a type of social action

toutary is not reducible to ‘fixing’ or brokering and a touter is not a ‘mere’ tout. Toutary is the dominant frame through which the state is perceived and made sense of by people in the villages in general and project benificiaries (intended and actual) in particular. This thesis has shown the relationships between the ways in which villagers talk about the increase of toutary as a domain of perception and social action, the decrease of the efficacy of the devtās and devis, and the similarities between the ways in which the roles, actions and perceptions of jhākars (who are supposed to mediate between domains of people and the domain of the devis and devtās) and touters (who are supposed to mediate between the domain of the state and the domain of village sociality) are perceived. People use these stories to link the ‘sacred’ and the ‘mundane’ by positing that the efficacy and visibility of the devis and the devatās have decreased because of increasing toutary.

The project staff sees their everyday practice as responding to the toutary of the beneficiaries and villagers. At the higher levels of bureaucracy, it is the discourse surrounding corruption that seems to provide the context for governmental imperatives that seek to constrain the actions of lower-level project staff. The narratives surrounding toutary also provide a framework of locating the contingent practices of the local actors as a critique of the expansionary developmental state.

The arguments offered here are framed within the experience of WORLP as a project, but toutary as an emergent domain of perceptions and actions is not specifically tied to this particular project. These experiences are generalisable across many different types of governmental intervention in the mission mode of state-fabrication as operationalised through quotidian logistics. The mission mode of state-fabrication has not ‘led’ to the formation of this domain of toutary. Rather both of these phenomena—the quotidian logistics of state-fabrication in a specific regional context and toutary—seem to have emerged and fed into each other over a certain period of time. The phenomenon of toutary itself is not new. To reiterate what has already been said, the domain of toutary is the liminal zone of intersection between state and society that morphed into a domain of

sociality along with the growth of the mission mode of state-fabrication over the last 25 years.

Although this thesis has tried to provide a counter-case for the political society formulation in some ways, it has not attempted to fulfill the overall task for political theory in the Global South that Chatterjee himself identified (Chatterjee 2004). The call was for working towards formulating theories that do justice to the experience of the South, and not reduce the narratives for explaining these experiences to being mere variations of a global master narrative or to stories of lack. But the mode of engagement of this thesis with this challenge has been ethnographic and not theoretical. One possible way of engaging with this theory and thinking about alternative agendas of theory building is to shift the focus (purely in a tactical sense) to practices and perceptions related to state-fabrication. One of the key learning outcomes of such a process of ethnographic engagement is that the form of state-fabrication has some resolutely regional and vernacular shape and articulations, and that these articulations need to be adequately mapped. Theory-building need not wait till all such variations have been elaborated. But there are relatively few descriptions of such regional/vernacular articulations (as opposed to the merely 'local') of state-fabrication, and the ethnographic narratives offered here go some distance in rectifying this state of affairs.

Looking back forward: Kalahandi now, Kalahandi then

But this brings us back to the original point of departure. This journey started by noting the ways in which Kalahandi has been framed as a land of drought, hunger and starvation. The thesis identified a key issue—that of absolute deprivation and amidst relative plenty—that seems to be increasingly framing Kalahandi. Chapter I showed how such issues were converted into issues of public action, and argued for a move towards studying the state rather than politics. This thesis has shown that processes of state-fabrication cannot be understood through narratives of failures of public action. Therefore, for the original problem at hand (the specific case of hunger and deprivation in Kalahandi, and the general case of relative plenty amidst absolute deprivation), this thesis

suggests possible lines of answer that displace questions of public action to the realm of state-fabrication. Such a response, by unraveling the completely contingent nature of such processes, shows us the cracks in such an edifice, and opens up possible avenues for action. Another possible line of response that this thesis has opened up is at an abstract level. The relevance of this approach is important in our context where narratives of failures of public action are offered without being offered any unpacking of the notion of the public; narratives of state-failure are offered without any attempts at understanding what kind of an entity 'the state' is.

In the context of development in Kalahandi, this thesis has also unraveled the logics of tactical action by various sets of social actors. Narratives of failures of public action, failures of the developmental state and depoliticisation erase the agencies of 'the weak'. By keeping the focus steadfastly on the contingencies of project practice and the ways in which the mission mode of state-fabrication opens up spaces for tactical manipulation of structures and practices of the state by various kinds of communities, this thesis might not have 'restored agency' to the subaltern; the subaltern might not 'speak' but she can definitely see and touch 'the state'. This thesis has tried to provide sketches for preparing the map of such a process. This is not enough, but this is the first step of a journey of a thousand miles.

Contributions, limitations and scope of future research

Contributions

Discipline and methodology

This thesis has identified some key problems/cracks in the theoretical architecture of an important set of narratives surrounding the state and politics in India. Using ethnographic methods, it has provided a counter-case against such narratives; it has produced a 'white-crow' so to speak, against extant dominant theories surrounding the state in India, and

makes further theoretical departure possible. These are detailed a little more in a subsequent section in this thesis titled ‘scope of future research’.

Methodologically the doctoral work has chosen a stance of multisited ethnography. There are relatively speaking few accounts of the fabrications of the everyday state in the context of development projects in India. This study is an addition to this literature. Further this thesis has grappled with relevant literary and other textual material, especially those produced in Odia, regarding Kalahandi; such material is generally not used as a source in development studies. This thesis has shown some of the benefits of using such material.

Conceptual

The thesis shifted the terrain of discussions surrounding state in India from one of state-formation to state-fabrication. It provided a formal account of such a process of fabrication by developing some key terms such as mode of state-fabrication, the regimes that govern such processes and the overall logistics and the specific tactics of state-fabrication through which such modes are operationalised on the ground. It also identified mission mode as an emergent mode of state-fabrication and some tactics such as multiplication, provisionalisation through which such a mode is operationalised in the context of Kalahandi. It also located and described a new domain of perception and social action, that of the vernacular domain of toutary, in Kalahandi through which people seem to cognise and critique the actions of the state. These are the conceptual contributions of this thesis.

Theme/Policy/Practice

Discussions surrounding watershed development have happened either from a public policy perspective or from an economic perspective. Generally efficiency outcomes and sustainability issues have occupied the foreground. Most of the academic work, especially social scientific work, on watersheds has happened in the impact assessment

mode (Hanumantha Rao 2000; Kerr 2002). There is no denying the relevance and importance of this work. But development institutions, especially governmental ones, need not be seen as some kind of a black box into which policies and programmes are fed in and outcomes (intended/unintended, desirable/undesirable) come out. It is perhaps time to unpack the mechanics of this governmental development apparatus to find out how it works. There have been some attempts at understanding such processes (Baviskar 2004; Chhotray 2004, 2007; Sangameswaran 2008).

This thesis tries to add to this literature by having a process focus as most studies on watershed development in particular and natural resource management in general suffer from an outcome focus rather than a process focus—'the how of things'. This thesis has focused on the how of things.

Limitations of the thesis

This thesis has two key limitations. The first limitation is a methodological one. To describe the contents of the domain of toutary, the strategy followed in this thesis was the elaboration of differences in linguistic usage. But the usage that this thesis has dealt with is that of speech as used by people in the field in Kalahandi. Written usages of the various terms used in the vernacular, such as of toutary, have not been engaged with. But the reasons for avoiding this mode of engagement is due to the use of methods of ethnography to show the possibilities that such a methodology opens up for studying the state, especially the everyday state, and the ways of its experiencing in social domains such as toutary.

The second limitation of the thesis is that the argument offered has been about the emergence of a specific mode of state-fabrication in India—the mission mode. But it has been built with a single case, that is, the DWM, Kalahandi. More work in other sectors and other missions needs to be done to make the argument broader, and more nuanced and effective.

Scope of future research

Missions

One key learning from the doctoral thesis has been that although the quotidian logistics of state-fabrication can be mapped out through multisited ethnography in a single region, a larger story about the state in India can perhaps be told by pluralising this narrative. The morphing of the state, which has been mapped in one sector (that of watershed development) and in one district (that of Kalahandi), needs to be undertaken both for exposing the contingent nature of such morphings and for building a larger comparative picture of such processes. Especially missions such as the National Rural Health Mission need to be studied in some detail. Macro studies also need to be undertaken of these missions at the various levels of the government (central, state, district, etc.) to have both qualitative and quantitative analyses of changes in terms of funding patterns, employee strength, etc. With increased social sector spending, this is a matter of both theoretical and practical concern.

Long 1980s

This thesis argued for a refocusing on what it has called 'the long 1980s' for broadening our understanding of changes in the processes of state-fabrication in India. But the details offered for understanding this period were schematic. This period of India's recent past needs to be studied intensively to understand the reordering of the relationship between the social, the political, the economic, and the state that gave rise to the mission mode of state-fabrication.

Toutary

As mentioned in the limitations of this thesis, toutary has been dealt with in the argument offered here by data gathered through observation and interviews. This was necessary for undertaking the task at hand—that of detailing the processes involved in the mission

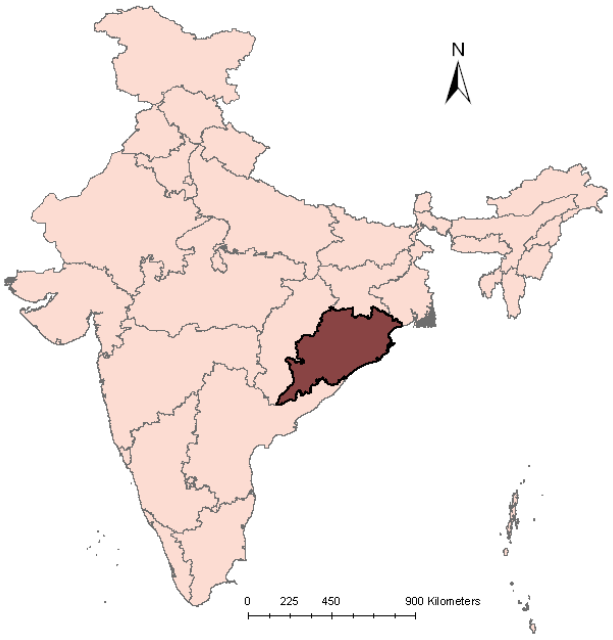
mode of state-fabrication. Analysis of textual material such memoirs, autobiographies, novels and stories needs to be undertaken in the future to supplement the analysis done in this thesis to undertake a more detailed mapping of toutary as a domain.

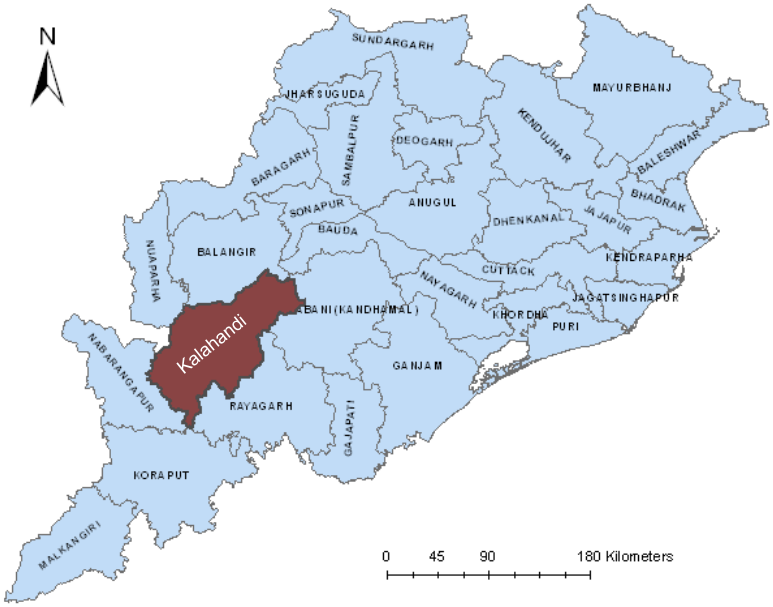
Generic form of theory building

A question that has emerged in the course of this thesis is this: can one talk about the state without talking about power? This thesis has argued that one way of characterising the changing dynamic of state-fabrication in India is by marking this change as a shift from a symbolic logistics of state-fabrication governed by a regime of visibility to a quotidian one governed by a regime of tactility. If the dynamic is posited in this fashion then one can use a sensory metaphor to characterise this change—the state–society interaction then can be seen changing from people 'seeing the state' to the state 'reaching out' and touching people. Thus, the relationship can be captured through sensory metaphors rather than through descriptions of operations of power (disciplinary or repressive) and resistance. This then gives us a small hint as to how one can begin to talk about the state in the postcolony without taking an obvious recourse to the language of power.

But such departures are necessary and important not only for studying the state in India. A successful resolution of the question posed here—how can accounts be provided of the state in India without taking recourse to the language of power—creates a broad form of a question that has much larger theoretical relevance. Two parallel possible questions from two other domains of enquiry may be noted here: (a) how can descriptions surrounding bodily practice and sexual desire be generated without taking recourse to the language of sexuality and sexual identity? (b) how can 'the economic' be understood without taking recourse to the language of capital? If one is successful in resolving this issue in the domain of the state and power then this resolution might help us create the generic form of an answer/solution that might be of use elsewhere in other domains of social enquiry.

Appendix I: Location of Odisha in India and Kalahandi in Odisha





Appendix II: Demographic Profile of Kalahandi

Sl. No.	Item	Kalahandi	Odisha
1.	Population	1,573, 054	41, 947, 358
2.	Sex ratio	1,003	978
3.	Density	199	269
4.	Decadal growth rate	17.79	13.97
5.	Literacy rate	60.22	73.45
6.	Male literacy rate	73.34	82.40
7.	Female literacy rate	47.27	64.36
8.	Rank in population amongst districts in 2001 census	12	
9.	Rank in population amongst districts in 2001 census	11	
10.	Change in percentage decadal growth rate	-0.30	-2.28
11.	Average annual exponential growth rate	1.65	1.32
12.	Percentage of the state's population	3.75	100
13.	Decadal change in literacy rate	14.28	10.37
14.	Gender gap in literacy rate	26.07	18.04
15.	Percentage of child population (0-6)	13.61	12

Extracted from Sethi, Bishnupada (Director of Census Operations, Orissa). 2011. *Provisional population totals (paper 1of 2011): Orissa series 22*. New Delhi: Office of Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India.

Appendix III: Developmental Indicators for Kalahandi

Sl. No.	Item	Kalahandi	Odisha
1.	Poverty ratio	83.76 %	51.98%
2.	Density of governmental medical institutions	128	92
3.	Enrolment in the 6-14 age group	74.11 %	74.71 %
4.	Education deprivation index[74]	97.96	74.05
5.	Sex ratio in the 0-6 age group	990	950
6.	Human Development Index	0.606	0.579
7.	Gender Development Index	0.579	0.546
8.	Reproductive Health Index	0.526	0.549
9.	Hospital beds per 1 lakh population	37	

Extracted from Government of Orissa. 2004. *Human development report 2004: Orissa*. Bhubaneswar: Planning and Coordination Department, Government of Orissa.

[74] For the undivided Kalahandi district that included the present districts of Kalahandi and Nuapada

Appendix IV: Profile of Presidents and Secretaries of the Ten Committees of the NGO PIA (20 in number)

Sl. No.	Item	Figure
1.	Proportion of SCs &STs	35%
2.	Proportion of OBCs	60%
3.	Proportion of people 40 years old or younger	60%
4.	Proportion engaged in agriculture as primary occupation	90%
5.	Proportion engaged in agriculture as primary occupation	10%
6.	Average household size	6.3
7.	Ownership of motored vehicle	60%
8.	Proportion belonging to families owning 10 acres or less	50%

Appendix V: Comparison Between Two Villages under the GO and NGO PIAs[75]

Sl. No.	Item	Village under NGO PIA	Village under GO PIA
1.	Percentage of APL card holders	22	6
2.	Percentage of BPL card holders	55	55
3.	Percentage of households with no ration cards	23	39
4.	Households receiving rice under the two rupee rice scheme of GoO	76	51
5.	Percentage of households that participated in meetings related to the Committee	85	55
6.	Percentage of households with membership of SHGs formed under WORLP	78	55
7.	Percentage of households reporting the watershed project staff as visiting the village most often compared to other governmental staff	95	55
8.	Percentage of households that have received either grants or loans from WORLP	72	51

[75] In both the villages, one-sixth of the households of the village were selected from a list of households collected from the respective secretaries of the Committees. In the village under the NGO PIA 60 households were interviewed with a semi-structured interview schedule. In the village under the GO PIA 65 households were interviewed with the same schedule.

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